Assessment of the Employment Services System in Hamilton

Social Planning & Research Council
SPRC
of Hamilton

255 West Avenue North, Hamilton, Ontario L8L 5C8
tel: (905) 522-1148 • fax: (905) 522-9124 • t.d.d. (905) 522-0434 • email: sprc@sprc.hamilton.on.ca • website: sprc.hamilton.on.ca

A United Way Agency

104-02223/

Assessment of the Employment Services System in Hamilton

November 2003

Prepared by:

Mark Fraser, Senior Social Planner
Cathy Gazzola, Research Assistant

Social Planning & Research Council
SPRC
of Hamilton

255 West Avenue North, Hamilton ON L8L 5C8
Phone: 905-522-1148 Fax: 905-522-9124 email: sprc@sprc.hamilton.on.ca
website: sprc.hamilton.on.ca

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July of 2003, the City of Hamilton's Public Health and Community Services Department contracted the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to conduct an assessment of local employment services. Funding for this assessment was provided through both the City of Hamilton's Public Health and Community Services Department and the Government of Canada.

The purpose of the study was to assess the local employment services sector and identify strategies that would ultimately enhance client services. Specific areas of research and examination included:

- Identification of gaps in employment service provision
- Client knowledge of employment and training services
- The effectiveness of meeting the unique support needs of diverse client groups
- The case management processes used by employment and training agencies
- Identify and examine the present system of integrating and tracking of services the client receives between agencies.

The study incorporated six distinct methods of research, to ensure a comprehensive analysis that considers a range of perspectives. Specific methods included a review of relevant literature and demographic information, surveys of local employment service providers and clients of employment services; key informant interviews with local service providers; a roundtable meeting with local employment service providers, and; an assessment of an alternative service delivery model.

While the full report includes much more detail, the executive summary focuses on key findings that emerged through the course of the study. Key findings are organized under the specific research methods employed.

Following a summary and discussion of findings, the report concludes with a list of recommendations based on a synthesis of findings from each phase of our research. In some cases recommendations are broad, as they would still require extensive planning to implement. In these cases, provisions have been included to guide the course of implementation, based on findings from the study.

A. Local Demographics

This section of the report considers local demographic trends that will ultimately impact on Hamilton's labour force in the coming years. To better understand the diversity of experiences in connecting with the local labour force, we consider three specific populations, including youth, new Canadians, and persons with disabilities.

Following are the key findings from this section of the report:

- Hamilton is facing an aging population and slow population growth, which will continue to affect the local labour force over the next three decades.
- Projections indicated that any future population growth will become totally dependant on immigration, yet Hamilton's immigration has dropped significantly in the past ten years.
- The highest proportions of unemployed individuals in Hamilton are found in the lower city, primarily North of Main Street.
- the majority of employment service agencies are located in Hamilton's downtown core.
- Unemployment rates are disproportionately high among new Canadians, youth and persons with disabilities than the general population

B. Local Employment Trends

This section of the report provides an overview of three specific documents and plans, including the HTAB Local Area Plan, 2002, the City of Hamilton's *HR Matters* report, and the *Social Vision for Hamilton* report (Caledon Institute, 2002). Each of these documents and their recommendations are considered as part of local decision making, and have direct implications on the delivery of local employment services.

Following are the key findings from this section of the report:

- The HTAB Local Area Plan identifies access to apprenticeship opportunities as a barrier to employment in the skilled trades.
- With respect to school-to-work transitions, there is a need to provide more experiential learning opportunities for in school youth, and to address the needs of work bound youth as well as those pursuing post-secondary education.
- Many new Canadians in Hamilton require support in achieving licensing requirements and gaining recognition of their credentials. There is also a need for occupational specific language training.
- Many persons with disabilities in Hamilton require continued support in the transition to employment, and flexible work environments.
- Youth in Hamilton require more on-the-job training opportunities. High-skilled youth are out-migrating to other regions/cities, and employers need enhanced incentives to hire and train youth. High school students who are unable to achieve success with the new Ontario curriculum will leave school and enter the workforce without a Grade 12 diploma. This group needs enhanced employment support services.

- The HTAB Local Area Plan recommends an impartial "one-stop" information, assessment and referral centre in Hamilton, and for services that provide a range of supports and interventions for disadvantaged clients (i.e. life-skills, training, and enhanced employment supports)

- With respect to school-to-work transition, the *HR Matters* Business Plan recommends strategies to attract and retain graduates, provide more work experience programs, and to educate youth around the "world of work" during elementary and middle school.

- The *Social Vision of Hamilton* (Caledon Institute, 2003) is based on the premise that economic progress is not possible unless we deal with skills development, social needs and quality of life. . It also focuses on minimizing duplication by integrating and coordinating various service sectors.

C. Existing Research on Local Employment Services

Over the years the SPRC has been extensively involved in studying and addressing local employment issues. Considering only the past five years, the SPRC has produced a number of reports that highlight issues and barriers to employment and access to employment services in Hamilton.

While some of our work in this area considered employment issues generally, many of our completed reports and ongoing research relates to a number of special client groups, including: internationally trained professionals and trades people, persons with disabilities, and youth (including in school and at-risk youth).

Following is a summary of key findings, based on an analysis of previous SPRC research related to employment and employment services in Hamilton:

- In each of the five studies conducted by the SPRC, access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment services was identified as a gap in local services.

- In local research focused on youth, new Canadians, persons with disabilities as well as the general population, a lack of work experience was identified as a gap in the local employment services system.

- A key theme throughout previous research on local employment services is the need for a more coordinated model of service delivery. The most recent study considering the needs of internationally-trained professionals and trades people recommended that Hamilton adopt a service delivery model similar to that in the neighbouring community of Kitchener-Waterloo.

- A key theme throughout previous research is that more coordination is required between the local employment service sector and other systems and institutions. Specifically identified were school boards, local employers, and various levels of government.

D. Alternative Models of Service Delivery

This section of the report examines an alternative model of employment service delivery to what currently exists locally. Hamilton currently maintains a fragmented approach to delivering employment services. While a range of services and service types are provided locally, there is no formal coordination of services.

In efforts to understand the respective benefits and drawbacks of alternative service delivery models, we compare Hamilton with the neighbouring region of Kitchener-Waterloo. In December 2002, with funding through the Kitchener Human Resource Centre of Canada, the YMCA launched the Employment Assistance Services (EAS). Essentially, the EAS provides centralized assessment of employment service needs, and referrals to the most appropriate local services.

Following is a summary of key findings from an analysis of alternative service delivery models:

- By tracking client progress through a case management approach, the EAS model provides accurate and reliable data on both the success of and demand for specific services and service types. This will ultimately create a feedback loop, informing the local employment service system of its strengths and needs for change in service delivery.
- By reducing or eliminating "bad fits" between clients and services, this model provides a cost savings to both clients and service providers, in terms of time and resources.
- The EAS system eliminates the need for service providers to conduct internal assessment of clients. Client data is also managed by the EAS, and is no longer collected by individual agencies.
- Currently, the EAS model in Kitchener-Waterloo only incorporates HRCC funded programs and services. While this includes approximately twenty local programs, it means that the local employment service system is only partly coordinated.

E. Survey of Employment Service Users

This section of the report highlights findings from our survey of clients of local employment agencies. In total, one hundred and one (T = 101) surveys were conducted. Surveys were conducted through a one-on-one interview format, in five local employment service agencies.

In efforts to reflect the diversity in Hamilton and more accurately reflect the employment needs of specific populations, surveys were conducted in agencies which serve youth, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, as well as the general population.

The following points represent a summary of key findings from the survey of local service users:

- Among the clients surveyed (T = 101), the level of awareness of service types was low. The average level of awareness of across the nine specific service types was thirty-two percent (32%), ranging from fifty-seven percent (57%) awareness of "job bank kiosks", to twenty-six percent (26%) awareness of "self-employment assistance".

- The majority of respondents had visited more than one local employment agency as part of their job-search. When asked why, respondents most often identified "exploring", to see what other agencies had to offer, and collecting information from as many sources as possible to increase their opportunities to find employment.

- Consistent with findings from previous research, transportation was also identified as a barrier to employment by a number of respondents (31%).

- Clients were asked "what skills, experience or training would help you to get a job?" Thirty-nine percent (39%) identified "work experience", while thirty-eight percent (38%) identified "job-skills training".

- When asked "what type of employment service would be most valuable in helping someone find work in Hamilton?" respondents suggested the need for more one-on-one individualized service, more emphasis on job-search training, and by connecting or referring clients directly to employers.

F. Survey of Local Employment Service Providers

This section of the report provides an overview of findings from our survey of local employment service providers. Surveys were sent by fax to seventy (70) employment service agencies in Hamilton. In total, forty-four (T = 44) surveys were returned, representing a response rate of sixty-three percent (63%).

The survey was designed to collect information and the perspectives of local employment service providers on their client population and services they provide, trends in local employment services identified through previous research, and approaches to service coordination and case management.

Following is a list of key findings from the survey of local employment service providers:

- For each of ten specific service types, more than half of all service providers surveyed required specific qualification to participate, ranging from fifty percent (50%) to eighty percent (80%) for specific services. Those services most often requiring qualifications were "mentoring programs" (80%) and "co-op programs" (80%).

- Thirty-two percent of service providers surveyed identified recipients of specific income maintenance programs (EI, OW and ODSP) as their primary target population. Youth were the second most common target population identified.

- In terms of increasing their clients' competitiveness in the local labour market", "job-search skills (50%), "awareness of employment opportunities" (46%) and "work experience" (46%) were the needs most often identified.

- Service providers surveyed most often identified "lack of transportation" (57%), and "costs associated with work" (29%) as circumstances that affect the employability of their clients. Additional comments provided by service providers further suggested that financial circumstances may be a barrier for some clients, identifying poverty and housing as issues.

- Ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents felt that "a system that maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information on all local services and programs" would be "a benefit to local service providers".

- One stop access to information would cut down on the resources required by service providers to understand what other local employment programs are available. Also, easy access to information would increase an agency's capacity to make more accurate referrals to other local agencies.

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents felt that a lack of appropriate job search skills is still an issue among their clients today.

- Seventy four percent (74%) felt that a lack of work experience programs still represents a gap in employment service today. Based on a four-point scale, ninety-three percent of respondents felt that work experience programs were either "Valuable" or "Very Valuable" in increasing the employability of their clients.

- While eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents conducted a standard intake form with new clients, an ninety-one percent (91%) completed both a needs assessments and record of service use and outcomes, only 38% of these agencies share records with other employment service providers.

- Seventy-four percent (74%) of those surveyed were part of a local network of local employment service providers.

- Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents felt that the current employment service sector requires more coordination. When asked why, respondents identified the need to avoid duplication by assuring the best client/service match. Also, that information shared through existing networks and groups is not always shared with front-line staff.

Interviews with Local Employment Service Providers

As part of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with five local employment service providers. Key informants were selected to represent services for new Canadians (1), youth (1), persons with disabilities (1), as well as mainstream services (2).

The interview format was designed to add depth to some of the key findings from both the client and employment service provider surveys. Specifically, the interviews focused on the coordination of information on local employment services, job-search skills, client case management, and the coordination of local employment services. The following sections in this chapter of the report identify key themes that emerged from an analysis of interview transcripts.

Following is a list of key findings from interviews with local service providers:

- All responses from key informants suggested a web-based model of coordinating information on local employment programs and services, but cautioned that funding must be maintained, as updating ever-changing information is a labour intensive process.

- There was a sense that there may be reluctance on the part of some local agencies to share information through a central system, suggesting that some agencies are territorial. Any attempts at coordination within the employment services sector may be seen by some as a threat of reduced autonomy.

- There was consensus among key informants that even if a centralized information system was in place and accessible to clients, they would require support in identifying appropriate programs and services.

- Key informants identified a range of personal and social issues that affect ones ability to effectively job-search. These issues include poverty, homelessness, education level, literacy, childcare, and self-confidence.

- Some generic job-search training programs do not assess or address individual needs. This is most evident with specific populations such as new Canadians and youth, who are new to the Canadian and local labour market.

- There was consensus among service providers that a record of service use would be a definite asset to service providers, citing that it would help to reduce overlap in service use.

- The key informants interviewed felt that a coordinated employment system should establish standard approaches to record keeping and staff training.

- that any move towards a more coordinated system must involve input from all stakeholder groups, including employers, service providers and clients of employment services.

G. Service Provider Roundtable Meeting

As part of the research design, a roundtable session for employment service providers was held on Wednesday, October 8, 2003 at the Ancaster Old Town Hall. Personal invitations were sent to selected service providers, with an attempt to target all special needs groups. A total of thirteen participants attended.

Participants were provided with two broad questions for discussion. The purpose of the discussion was to clarify and add depth to our understanding of some of the themes emerging from our research. Although broad in their implications, the questions focused on pre-employment supports and client case management.

The following points represent a summary of key findings or themes that emerged through the roundtable discussion:

- All of the roundtable participants agreed that pre-employment programs are often crucial to a client's success in the labour market.

- Clients may be facing a variety of issues that affects their employability and potential for job retention. These issues may include poverty, homelessness, mental or physical health issues, addictions, legal issues and family stresses.

- Participants agreed that venue or system for co-ordinating services across service sectors would be a great benefit to their clients. Currently, clients often have a series of "case managers" all developing separate service plans that often conflict with each other.

- Longer programs and more one-on-one opportunities were recommended to ensure that individual needs are identified and addressed.

- Lack of transportation was also raised as a barrier for many clients of employment services. Without a vehicle, many employment opportunities are inaccessible. As suggested by roundtable participants, public transportation simply does not get people to where many new jobs are.

- Total commitment of the funding agencies must be present before any type of coordinated case management system will work. At the moment many service providers risk losing funding if they work with others.

- Alternative models of service delivery were discussed, with specific reference to Work Way in the Halton-Peel Region, and EAS in Kitchener-Waterloo. These systems include a central assessment and referral service. The central agency maintains contact with service providers to monitor client outcomes, and conducts any follow-ups, eliminating much of the administration at the agency level.

- Providing adequate and respectful client service was a reoccurring concern amongst the participants. An effective case management system must keep people as the focus not just administrative outcomes.

- It was strongly recommended that any move toward a coordinated or centralized model of service delivery should involve extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including clients, service providers and local employers.

Recommendations:

Based on a synthesis of key findings from each phase of our research, the following recommendations were developed. In some cases recommendations are broad, as they would still require extensive planning to implement. In these cases, provisions have been included to guide the course of implementation, based on findings from the study.

Based on findings from this study, it is recommended:

1. **That a coordinated system of maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services be developed in Hamilton.**

   Provision:
   - The development of a coordinated information system must include consultations with local employment service providers, through existing networks including EARN and YEN. An infrastructure of information sharing does currently exist within the local employment services sector, which should be considered as the foundation for further development.

2. **That a coordinated assessment and referral model of employment services be implemented in Hamilton, based on models existing in other jurisdictions.**

   Provision:
   - Implementing a new model of employment service delivery in Hamilton must include consultations with local employment service providers, through existing networks including EARN and YEN. A new model of service delivery should consider the existing structure of the employment services sector as the foundation for development.

3. **That funders of employment programs and services reinvest in pre-employment supports, including housing, income and health service supports, that address individual needs and circumstances which may effect an individual's ability to secure or maintain employment.**

   Provision:
   - Service providers consulted during this study suggested that some generic programs and services do not meet the individual needs of many clients. Programs and services must be flexible, with the capacity to assess and respond to individual needs.

4. **That funders of employment programs and services direct more resources toward developing and providing work experience opportunities in Hamilton.**

   Provision:

   - Developing work experience programs (i.e., apprenticeship and co-op placements, job shadowing, mentoring, etc.) requires extensive networking and liaising with local employers. Service providers consulted during this study cautioned that process of developing work experience programs must be well coordinated, so that local employers are not being approached by a number of employment service providers.

5. **That the employment services sector be coordinated with other service sectors (including housing, health-care, corrections, and income maintenance) so that the system can effectively identify and respond to a range of issues and circumstances which may affect a client's employability.**

   Provision:

   - Findings from the study suggest a multi-disciplinary case management approach, where case managers from different service sectors coordinate the development of a client's return-to-work plan.

6. **That an analysis of public transportation system planning and HSR routing in particular, be conducted to determine the accessibility of industrial areas or other areas with opportunities for employment and that long range planning for the City of Hamilton provide clear consideration of the public transportation needs of the labour force.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to acknowledge the City of Hamilton Public Health and Community Services Department and Human Resource Development Canada for funding this study. Special thanks to Colleen Van Berkel, Jim Boles and Suzanne Brown from the City of Hamilton Public Health and Community Services Department for their role as advisors to the study.

Thanks also to Cathy Gazzola - Research Assistant, Shani Doherty and Sally Quider - Support Staff, and Don Jaffray - Executive Director of the SPRC, for their contributions to the study and production of the final report.

Finally, thanks to local employment service providers and clients of local employment services for their participation in surveys, interviews and roundtable discussions conducted through the course of the study.

Funding Support provided by

Hamilton

Funding Support provided by

Canada

Support to SPRC provided by

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN 2
- 2.1 Literature Review 2
- 2.2 Employment Services Survey 2
- 2.3 Client Survey 3
- 2.4 Key Informant Interviews - Service Providers 3
- 2.5 Service Providers Roundtable 4
- 2.6 GIS Mapping 4

3.0 LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS 5
- 3.1 New Canadians 9
- 3.2 Youth 10
- 3.3 Persons with Disabilities 13
- 3.4 Summary of Key Findings 14

4.0 LOCAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS 15
- 4.1 Local Area Plan - 2002 15
- 4.2 HR Matters Report 17
- 4.3 The Social Vision for Hamilton 20
- 4.4 Summary of Key Findings 21

5.0 EXISTING RESEARCH ON LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES 22
- 5.1 General Trends in Employment Services 23
- 5.2 Employment Issues and Service for Youth 23
- 5.3 Employment Issues and Service for New Canadians 24
- 5.4 Employment Issues and Service for Persons with Disabilities 25
- 5.5 Summary of Key Findings 25

6.0 ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY 27
- 6.1 The Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services 27
- 6.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of the EAS Model 29
- 6.3 Summary of Key Findings 30

7.0 SURVERY OF SERVICE USERS 31
7.1 Characteristics of Respondents 31
7.2 Employment Status and Expectations 33
7.3 Awareness and Experience with Local Employment Services 36
7.4 Barriers to Employment and Service Needs 37
7.5 Summary of Key Findings 40

8.0 SURVEY OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS 41
8.1 Characteristics of Service Providers Surveyed 41
8.2 Assessing Trends in Local Employment Services 47
8.3 Information on Local Employment Services 47
8.4 Qualifying for Programs and Services 48
8.5 Job-Search Training 49
8.6 Access to Work Experience Programs 49
8.7 Service Coordination and Case Management 50
8.8 Summary of Key Findings 53

9.0 FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS 55
9.1 Information on Local Employment Services 55
9.2 Job-Search Skills 56
9.3 Client Case Management 57
9.4 Coordination of Local Employment Services 58
9.5 Summary of Key Findings 58

10.0 SERVICE PROVIDER ROUNDTABLE MEETING 60
10.1 Pre-Employment Strategies 60
10.2 Client Case Management 62
10.3 Summary of Key Findings 63

11.0 DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS 64
11.1 Access to Information 64
11.2 Service Coordination 65
11.3 Pre-Employment Services 65
11.4 Work Experience Programs 66
11.5 Transportation 66

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS 67

13.0 REFERENCES 69

APPENDICES:

Appendix A - Service Provider Survey....70

Appendix B - List of Service Providers Surveyed....78

Appendix C - Client Survey....80

Appendix D - List of Key Informants....84

Appendix E - Key Informant Interview Format....86

Appendix F - Roundtable Participants....89

Appendix G - Roundtable Agenda....91

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In July of 2003, the City of Hamilton's Public Health and Community Services Department contracted the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to conduct an assessment of local employment services. Funding for this assessment was provided through both the City of Hamilton's Public Health and Community Services Department and the Government of Canada.

The purpose of the study was to assess the local employment services sector and identify strategies that would ultimately enhance client services. Specific areas of research and examination included:

- Identification of gaps in employment service provision
- Client knowledge of employment and training services
- The effectiveness of meeting the unique support needs of diverse client groups
- The case management processes used by employment and training agencies
- Identify and examine the present system of integrating and tracking of services the client receives between agencies.

Over the years, the SPRC has been extensively involved in studying and addressing local employment issues, and has generated a number of studies directly related to the provision of employment services and employment service needs in Hamilton.

Throughout this body of research a number specific issues have been cited repeatedly, which relate directly to the objectives of the current study. In these cases, the current study sought to confirm whether or not these issues are relevant today, and to identify strategies to address these issues based on the perspectives of key stakeholders.

As detailed in section 2.0 - Research Design, the study incorporated a range of methods of consulting key stakeholders, identifying factors that affect the provision of local employment services. Specific methods of consultation included surveys of clients and service providers, key informant interviews, and a roundtable focus group meeting.

To provide a context to the findings from consultations, the study considers local demographics, literature related to employment trends and literature related to local employment services. As a comparison, the study also considers an alternative model of employment service delivery than what currently exists in Hamilton.

The report concludes with a list of recommendations based on a synthesis of findings from each phase of our research. In some cases recommendations are broad, as they would still require extensive planning to implement. In these cases, provisions have been included to guide the course of implementation, based on findings from the study.

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

The SPRC's assessment of local employment services incorporated six distinct methods of research, to ensure a comprehensive analysis that considers a range of perspectives. Specific methods included a review of relevant literature and demographic information, surveys of local employment service providers and clients of employment services; key informant interviews with local service providers; a roundtable meeting with local employment service providers, and; an assessment of an alternative service delivery model.

This section of the report provides an overview of each research method to be employed, considering how each method contributes to the final analysis and recommendations. Each method incorporated into the study builds on findings from the previous.

2.1 Literature Review

A review of relevant literature review was conducted as part of the current study, including four specific components. First, an analysis of local demographics and population trends was produced, which included a focus on three special needs groups (i.e. new Canadians, persons with disabilities and youth).

Second, a review of local research related to the provision of employment services was conducted. This included a review of previous research conducted by the SPRC, and provides an overview of trends and issues consistently cited throughout the research.

The third component of the literature review focused on broad employment trends and local policies and plans that affect the provision of local employment services. This included long term human resource strategies developed by the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Department and the Hamilton Training Advisory Board (2003), as well as the *Social Vision* report produced by the Caledon Institute (2002).

The fourth and final component of the literature review involved an assessment of an alternative model of employment service delivery. This section of the report provides a detailed overview of the Kitchener-Waterloo model of service delivery, and considers the benefits and drawbacks in comparison to Hamilton's approach to service delivery.

2.2 Employment Services Survey

A survey was developed and disseminated to 70 local employment service providers (see APPENDIX A for a copy of the service provider survey). Surveys were distributed to service providers by fax, with one fax follow-up and one telephone follow-up to increase response rates. In total forty-four percent (44%) of service providers completed the survey, for a response rate of sixty-three percent (63%) (see APPENDIX B for a complete list of respondents).

The survey was designed to collect a range of qualitative and quantitative information, including:

- Whether or not issues, trends and gaps in service identified in previous local research are relevant today;
- Types of services provided (i.e. training, job-search, information resources, etc.) and criteria for participation;
- A profile of clients served;
- A service provider perspective on local service needs;
- Methods of tracking clients and identifying client outcomes;
- The level of coordination within the employment services sector;
- A service provider perspective on strategies to improve service coordination and outcomes for clients.

2.3 Client Survey

A survey was developed and conducted through one-on-one interviews with clients of local employment services (see APPENDIX C for a copy of the client survey). One hundred and one survey/interviews were conducted at four local employment service agencies, including agencies targeting youth, newcomers and persons with disabilities.

The specific agencies where surveys were conducted included PATH Employment Services, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), Careerworx, The East Hamilton Employment Resource Centre, and the Downtown Employment Resource Centre.

The survey incorporated a mix of open and closed ended questions, required approximately 10 minutes to conduct. It was designed to elicit the following information:

- Client status (i.e. E.I., ODSP, OW, WSIB recipient, employed, underemployed or unemployed);
- A client perspective of service needs;
- The level of awareness among clients of local employment and training services;
- A client perspective on access/barriers to local employment services, and;
- A client perspective on how local services might be provided more effectively.

2.4 Key Informant Interviews - Service Providers

A format for semi-structured key informant interviews was developed and interviews were conducted with 5 local service providers (see APPENDIX D for a list of key informants). To ensure a range of perspectives, key informants represented services for persons with disabilities (1), newcomers (1), youth (1) and, "mainstream service" (2).

Each interview was conducted in approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. The format of the interview was designed to clarify issues and trends identified through surveys of both service providers and clients.

Essentially, interviews were designed to elicit the following information:

- Clarify and expand on issues or trends related to the coordination of services;
- Clarify and expand on issues or trends related to tracking client service usage/case management and success outcomes;
- Identify potential strategies to improve service coordination and client tracking/case management, including challenges, benefits and concerns.

2.5 Service Providers Roundtable

A service provider roundtable meeting was held with 14 local service providers. Participation in the roundtable was by invitation only, and participants were selected to ensure a range of perspectives (see APPENDIX F for a list of roundtable participants).

The roundtable provided an opportunity to share findings to date, and receive feedback from participants. It was structured to allow service providers to discuss strategies for improving the local employment service system, and consider recommendations for change (see APPENDIX G the roundtable meeting agenda).

2.6 GIS Mapping

Maps were created using GIS software, that identify unemployment rates of specific target populations, and the locations of employment service agencies in Hamilton. A visual display of service locations helps to identify gaps in terms of location/accessibility of services. In total, three were generated, identifying the following:

- Employment service agencies in Hamilton.
- Unemployment Rates in Hamilton
- Unemployed youth in Hamilton Ages 15 to 25.

3.0 LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS

With respect to local employment programs and services, assessing local demographics and demographic trends helps us to understand current and future need for services. Hamilton is currently facing two immediate and significant population trends that will ultimately affect the local labour force. These trends include an aging population and slow population growth.

Our aging population is a result of the "baby boom" following the second world war, and a dramatic decline in birth rates after 1965. The result of these events were not really felt until early to mid 1990's, when we began to see a decline in the proportion of youth and an increase in the proportion of seniors in our population.

Slow natural growth in Hamilton's population will also effect our local labour force. According to Statistics Canada, as soon as 2013 the number of pre-retirement adults (55-64) will outnumber the pre-entry group of youth (15-24). This gap is projected to widen as time progresses. What this means is that there will be more workers leaving the labour force than are being replaced.

Hamilton currently relies heavily on immigration for population growth. Although already responsible for 85% of annual population growth, it is projected that immigration will soon make up 100 % of total population growth.

As identified in the City of Hamilton's HR Matters - Hamilton Human Resource Strategy Study (2002), local action can be taken to address the decline in population growth. First, we must work toward reducing domestic migration as well as the number of outgoing commuters, encouraging people to live and work in Hamilton. Given the low expectations for natural population growth, we must also develop strategies to attract more new Canadians to Hamilton. Finally, we must focus on identifying specific skill sets which will be in high demand in the coming years and invest in training/retraining our existing labour force.

In efforts to provide a local context, we will consider two specific labour market characteristics as they relate to Hamilton; participation in the local labour force and unemployment rates. According to Statistics Canada, participation in the local labour market or "participation rate" reflects "those members of the civilian non-institutionalized population 15 years of age and over who, during the reference week were either employed or unemployed".

It is important to note that because an individual is not working, does not, by definition, mean that they are unemployed. According to Statistics Canada, an individual must meet the following criteria in order to be deemed unemployed:

- Were without work, had actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks and were available for work
- Had not actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks but had been on lay-off and were available for work with the intent of returning to their existing job
- Had not actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks but had a new job to start in 4 weeks or less from the reference week and were available for work

Defined in this way, the labour force participation rate includes members of the working aged population who are employed or meet the criteria for "unemployed". Those not participating in the labour force often include stay at home parents, full-time students and discouraged workers.

TABLE 1 shows the labour force participation rate and unemployment rate for both Hamilton and the province of Ontario, based on Statistics Canada 2001 census data. In terms of total participation rate, that for Hamilton (63.8%) is lower than that for the province (67.3%). At the same time, the unemployment rate is slightly higher for Hamilton (6.4%) compared to the provincial rate (6.1%). What this means is that a smaller proportion of working aged individuals in Hamilton are participating in the labour market, while a greater proportion are unemployed.

TABLE 1: Participation and Unemployment Rates for Hamilton and Ontario - 2001 Census Data

	Hamilton			Ontario		
Characteristics	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Participation Rate	63.8	70.2	57.8	67.3	73.4	61.5
Unemployment Rate	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.1	5.8	6.5

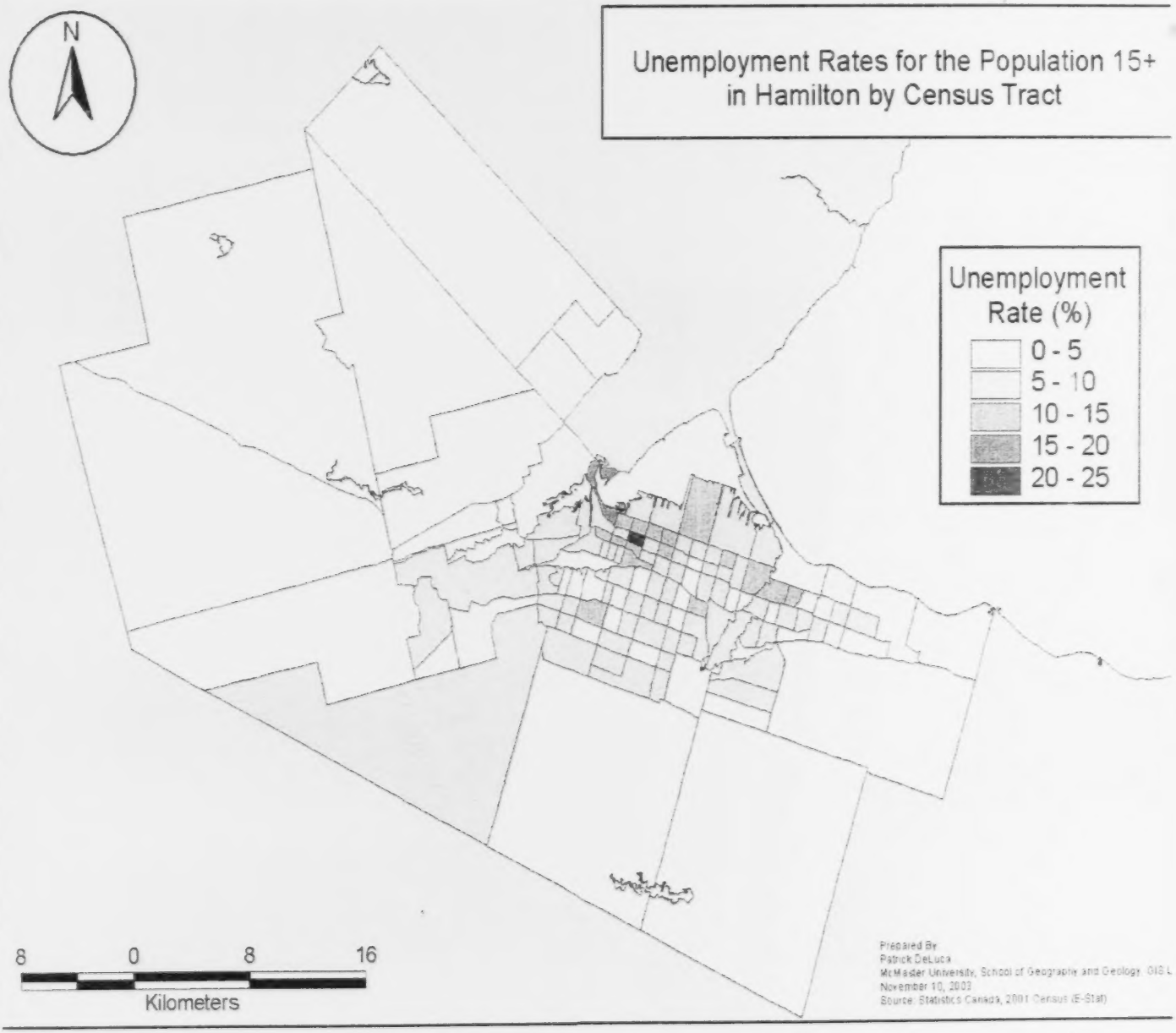
The figure of 6.4% as the unemployment rate for Hamilton can also be misleading. While this figure represents an average for the city of Hamilton, there are some areas of the city that experience substantially higher unemployment rates.

MAP 1 shows unemployment rates in Hamilton by census tract. A census tract reflects a geographical region containing approximately twenty-five hundred to seventy-five hundred residents. The map shows unemployment rates in increments of five percent, from 0 to 5% to 20 to 25%. Based on MAP 1 it is clear that the areas in the city with the highest unemployment rates are in the lower city, and mostly North of Main Street.

In efforts to better understand whether the locations of local employment services in Hamilton are consistent with areas of need for services, MAP 2 was developed. MAP 2 shows the distribution of employment service agencies in Hamilton.

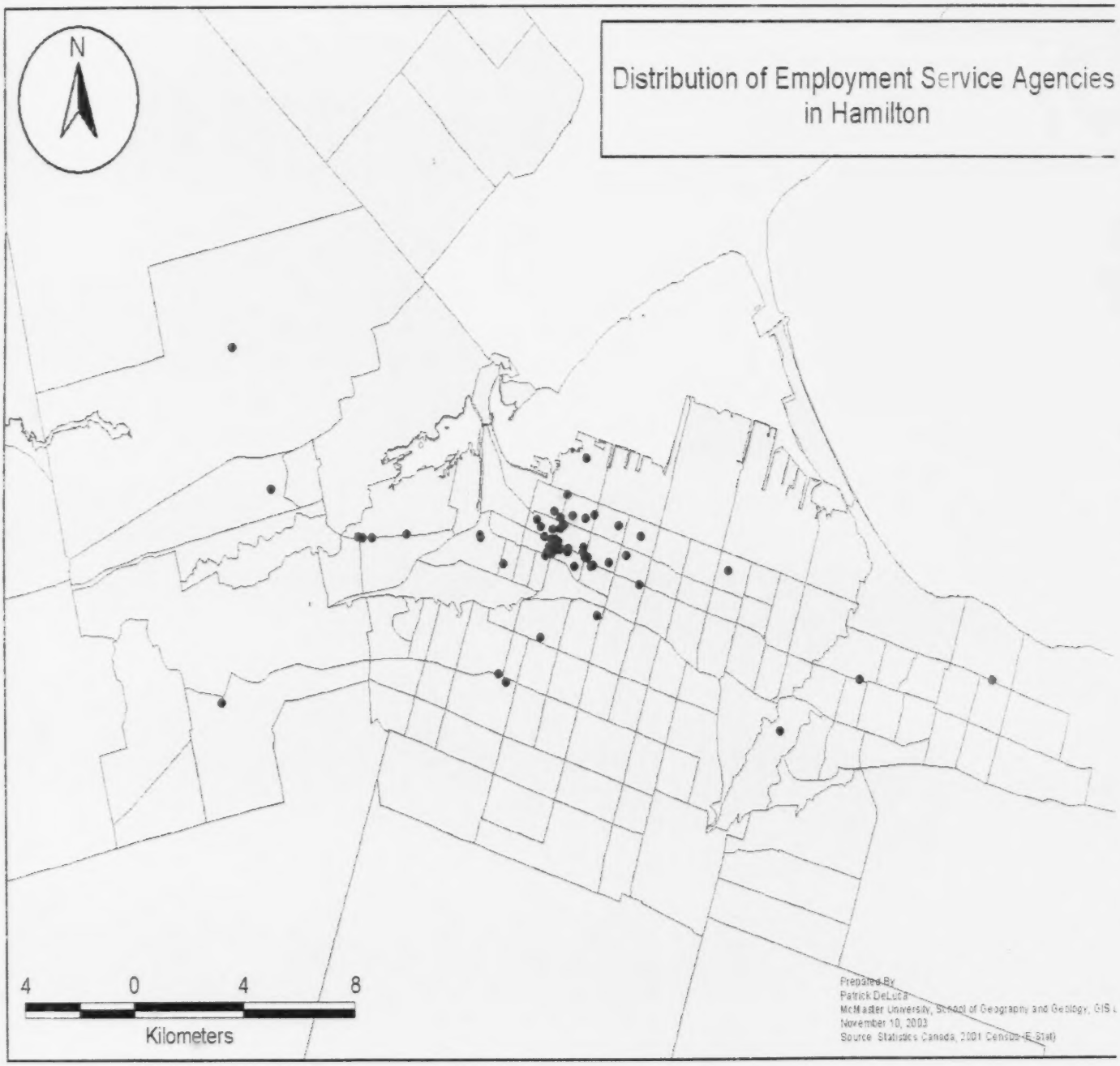
The map represents a total of seventy-eight local agencies, most of these being located in the downtown core. While this does not conclusively determine that local services are appropriately distributed throughout the city, there does seem to be some correlation between agency locations and areas of high unemployment.

MAP 1



It is important to realize that the labour force is not a homogeneous population. In fact, specific subgroups of the labour force experience disproportionately high unemployment rates as a result of a range of circumstances. The following sections of this chapter will examine labour force participation among three specific groups, including new Canadians, youth and persons with disabilities.

MAP 2


N
Distribution of Employment Service Agencies in Hamilton
4 0 4 8
Kilometers
Prepared By:
Patrick DeLuca
McMaster University, School of Geography and Geology, GIS L
November 10, 2003
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census (E Stat)

3.1 New Canadians

A recent report from The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (2002) shows a provincial unemployment rate of 18.2% among immigrant professionals during 2002, while the average unemployment rate in Ontario was only 5.4%.

Trends like this should be of particular concern for the city of Hamilton. According to Statistics Canada's 2001 census, more than one-quarter of the population of the Hamilton census metropolitan area were foreign-born. This represents the third highest proportion of foreign-born residents among such urban areas in Canada, surpassed only by Toronto and Vancouver.

The following table shows the immigrant population as a proportion of the total population, comparing the City of Hamilton, Ontario, and Canada . While the proportion of immigrants in Hamilton is slightly less than that for Ontario (26.5% and 27.8% respectively), it is much higher than the proportion of immigrants in Canada as a whole (19.3%).

TABLE 2: The Immigrant Population as a Proportion of the Total Population, Comparing the City of Hamilton, Ontario and Canada - 2001 Census Data

Location	Total Population	Immigrant Population	Proportion of Immigrants by total population
Hamilton	490,268	129,732	26.5%
Ontario	11,410,000	3,172,274	27.8%
Canada	30,007,094	5,788,229	19.3%

Source: from HR Matters, 2002 - Statistics Canada - Special Tabulations - Small Area Data Division

As shown in Table 3, new immigrants to Hamilton represented 83.1% of the population growth between 1990 and 1994, and 84.1% between 1995 and 1999. Given current trends, it is expected that new immigrant arrivals will represent 100% of population growth in coming years. This trend will have a direct impact on the local labour force, resulting in a higher proportion of newcomers.

TABLE 3: New Immigrant Arrivals in Hamilton as a proportion of Total Population Growth

Year	Population Growth	New Immigrant Arrivals	New Immigrants as % of Population Growth
1990-1994	19,613	16,292	83.1%
1995-1999	22,460	18,900	84.1%

Source: from HR Matters, 2002 - Statistics Canada - Special Tabulations - Small Area Data Division

Almost half (46%) of newcomers to Canada are part of the 25-44 age cohort, with another 17% being in the 45-64 age group. Hamilton however, is not the place of choice for many newcomers. According to data from Statistics Canada, Hamilton's percentage of total immigration has dropped from 28.2% before 1961 to 12.2% in 1997-2000.

3.2 Youth

Canada's youth population is declining. The 15-24 year old age group dropped from 4.8 million in 1980 to 3.9 million in 1991. In 2001, there were approximately 2.1 million youth aged 15-19. At only 6.7% of total population this is a decline from 10% in 1976 (*Youth In Canada, Statistics Canada, October 2002).* It is estimated that this will drop further to 5.3% in 2021 and 5% in 2051. Only Aboriginal youth are a growing segment of the population being reported as 9% of the total population.

Participation rates have dropped fallen from 71.0% in 1989 to 63.1% in June 2000 possibly due to youth staying in school longer.

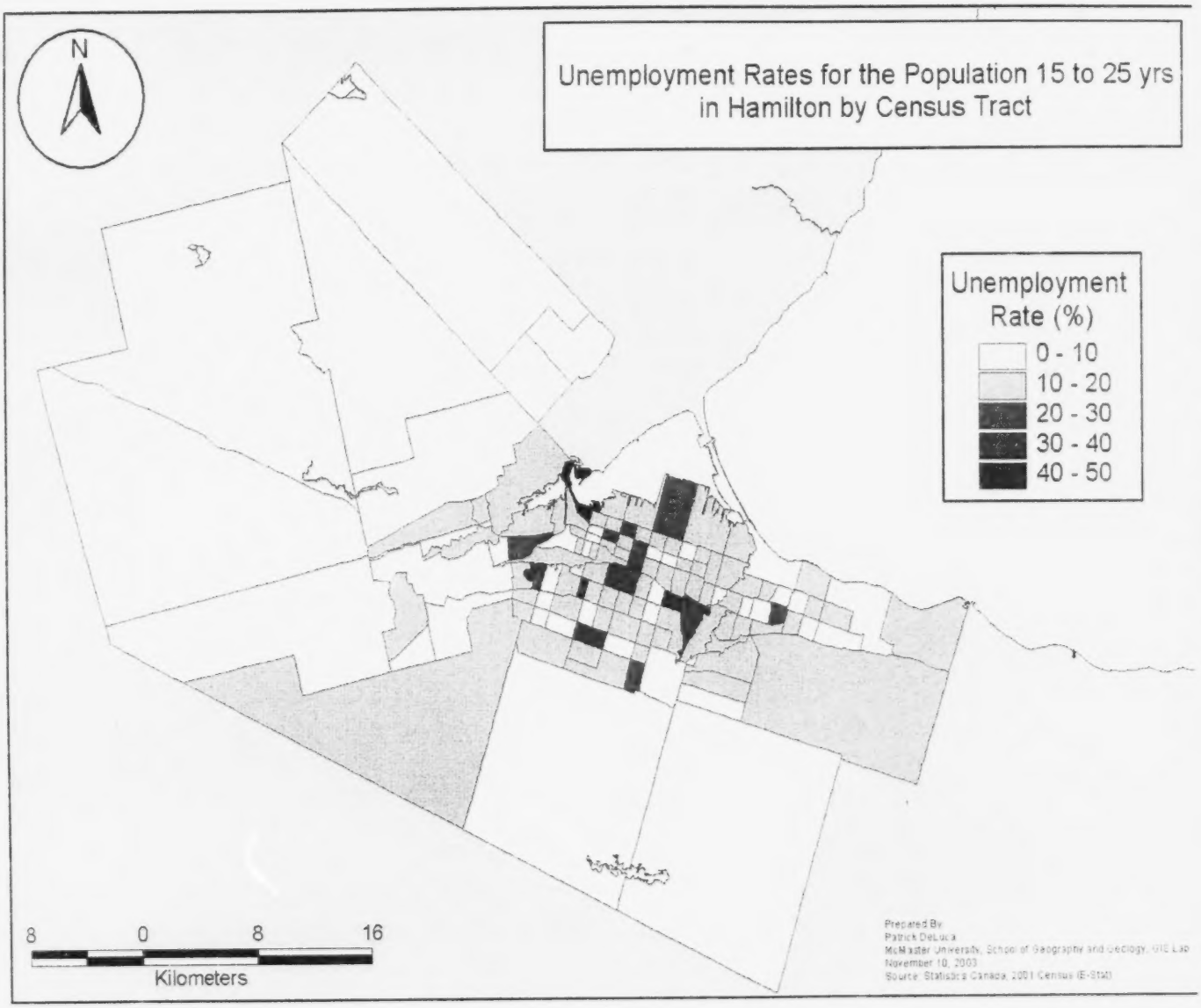
Approximately 38% of Canada's youth population lives in Ontario with 5.75% residing in the Hamilton Census Metropolitan area. According to data in the 2001 Census's Community Profiles, Hamilton's youth population between 15-19 is about 6.7 % of the total population with the 15-24 group at 12.9%, and then the 45-64 age group at 23.7%.

TABLE 4: Participation and Unemployment Rates For The Hamilton HRDC Management Area – 1996 Census Data

		Total	Males	Females	Visible Minority
15 to 24	Participation Rate	63.6 %	64.5 %	62.7 %	43.8 %
	Unemployment Rate	18.2 %	19 %	17.4 %	27.3 %
25 to 29	Participation Rate	83%	89.4 %	76.8 %	73.9 %
	Unemployment Rate	11.1 %	11.1 %	10.9 %	19.1 %
30+	Participation Rate	60.6 %	69 %	53 %	66.6 %
	Unemployment Rate	6.5 %	6.2 %	6.8 %	11 %

To better understand where unemployed youth (15 to 25) reside in Hamilton, MAP 3 was constructed. As shown in MAP 3, the majority of unemployed youth in reside in what was previously considered the municipality of Hamilton, pre-amalgamation. Pockets of youth unemployment between thirty and fifty percent are scattered throughout the lower city and mountain region.

MAP 3


N
Unemployment Rates for the Population 15 to 25 yrs in Hamilton by Census Tract
Unemployment Rate (%)
0 - 10
10 - 20
20 - 30
30 - 40
40 - 50
8 0 8 16
Kilometers
Prepared By:
Patrick DeLuca
McMaster University, School of Geography and Geology, GIS Lab
November 10, 2003
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census (E-Stat)

3.3 Persons with Disabilities

For the purpose of this report a person with disability is defined by a self-reported activity limitation. A person is defined as a person with disabilities if their activity is limited because of a long term physical condition, mental condition or health condition. Labour force participation and employment rates are misleading for this population. Given that disability or activity limitation is self reported, and participation rates are generally low, much of this population goes undetected with respect to labour force activity.

Not surprisingly the incidence of disability rises with age; for those between 15-64 the rate is 9.9% (9.4 for males, 10.4 for females) while that for those over 65 is 40.5% (38.5 for males, 42.0 for females). The data for the Aboriginal population from the Canadian Community Health Survey gives disability rates of 30% for the 15-64 age group and 53% for those over 65.

The most recent data available on labour force activity among persons with disabilities in Hamilton is from the 1996 census. Data from the 1996 Census indicates that Hamilton-Wentworth's disabled population is at 34,935 or 7.47 % of the total population. Extrapolating 2001 census data at the provincial level suggests that the City of Hamilton currently has a disabled population of approximately 36, 623 persons.

TABLE 5 shows the labour force participation rate by age and activity limitation in Hamilton-Wentworth, based on 1996 Census Data. Among persons reporting an activity limitation, the labour force participation rate is lower for all age groups.

TABLE 5: Labour Force Participation Rate by Age and Activity Limitation In Hamilton-Wentworth - 1996 Census Data

Age Group	Labour Force Participation Rate	
	With Activity Limitation	No Activity Limitation
15 to 64	40 % (14, 100)	79 % (212,774)
15 to 24	46 % (1,280)	65 % (36,615)
25 to 34	56 % (2,700)	86 % (57,820)
35 to 44	51 % (4,060)	88% (58,070)
45 to 54	44 % (3,930)	87 % (42,235)
55 to 64	21 % (2,130)	57 % (18,035)

TABLE 4 reports unemployment rates by age group and activity limitation in Hamilton-Wentworth in 1996. Again, unemployment rates are substantially higher for each age reporting an activity limitation, than for those with no activity limitation.

TABLE 6: Unemployment Rate By Age and Activity Limitation In Hamilton-Wentworth - 1996 Census Data

Age Group	Unemployment Rate	
	With Activity Limitation	No Activity Limitation
15 to 64	16 % (2,235)	9 % (18, 485)
15 to 24	30 % (390)	18 % (6,640)
25 to 34	18 % (485)	9 % (5,280)
35 to 44	16 % (630)	6 % (3,665)
45 to 54	13 % (505)	5 % (1,945)
54 to 64	11 % (225)	5 % (965)

3.4 Key Findings

1. Hamilton is facing an aging population and slow population growth, which will continue to affect the local labour force over the next three decades.

2. Projections indicated that any future population growth will become totally dependant on immigration, yet Hamilton's immigration has dropped significantly in the past ten years.

3. The highest proportions of unemployed individuals in Hamilton are found in the lower city, primarily North of Main Street.

4. the majority of employment service agencies are located in Hamilton's downtown core.

5. Unemployment rates are disproportionately high among new Canadians, youth and persons with disabilities than the general population

4.0 LOCAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

How one looks at the world of work has changed dramatically over the past few decades. A human resource based model of economic development has replaced the industry driven way of dealing with employment (Canadian Journal of Policy Research, Spring 2003). Concepts such as human capital, value-added and clusters are being used as common points of reference.

The rise of the Internet has changed the way many companies do business. The marketplace is increasingly global and export oriented. Knowledge economy has replaced manufacturing as the growing trend with such an economy requiring highly skilled, highly educated workers credential driven (Knowledge Matters- Skills and Learning for Canadians - HRDC) environment. Skill development is the "new" way to look at finding a job.

Over the past five years in Hamilton, there has been extensive planning for the future of the local labour market. Much of this activity was initiated by the City of Hamilton's Economic Development Department, and the Hamilton Training and Advisory Board (HTAB).

The following sections provide an overview of three specific documents and plans, including the HTAB Local Area Plan, 2002, the City of Hamilton's *HR Matters* report, and the *Social Vision for Hamilton* report (Caledon Institute, 2002).

Each of these documents and their recommendations are considered as part of local decision making, and have direct implications on the delivery of local employment services. Those issues and recommendations related directly to the provision of employment services are the focus of this overview.

4.1 Local Area Plan - 2002

The Hamilton Training Advisory Board (formerly the Hamilton-Wentworth Train Board) was formed in 1996 and became fully operational in January 1998, making it part of a network of 22 volunteer training boards in Ontario - all of which reflect a common commitment to training and adjustment with the context of their own communities.

Included in their annual deliverables is an environmental scan. This report provides a snapshot of the economy in Hamilton, including labour force and training issues. Also included in their deliverables is a local area plan or blueprint for action to address the issues and recommendations raised in the environmental scan report.

The Local Area Plan 2002 Update (LAP) is an action plan to address labour force issues in the Hamilton community. The Local Area Plan also reflects the gaps and areas of unmet need in local labour force development. The report identifies local initiatives and specifically new initiatives that relate to labour force development and local partnerships.

The Local Area Action Plan 2002 plan is organized according to the following broad categories:

- Education and Training
- Economic/Labour Force Development
- Workforce Adjustment
- Sectors

With respect to education and training, apprenticeships were highlighted as a issue of concern. The following issues were identified in the LAP report:

- Reluctance of employers to take on first year apprentices continues to be a problem
- The classroom fee may become a barrier to entering apprenticeship. This needs to be monitored.
- There are not enough journeymen to train younger workers.

The other major section under Education and Training has to deal with School-to -Work Transition. Here the LAP report highlights the following issues:

- There is a need to promote experiential education (co-op) to youth in high schools, at all academic levels.
- There is a need to create more seamless pathways between high school, OYAP/co-op programs, college apprenticeship training and the workplace.
- High schools tend to favor the needs of the academic students while not serving the needs of the work bound students.

In terms of economic/labour force development, the following issues were identified in the LAP report:

- A key strategy is to pool resources and develop collaborative recruitment and retention strategies to support local employers.
- There is a need to continue analyzing skills replacement needs in Hamilton economic sectors.

With respect to workplace and adjustment issues, the report highlights issues and recommendations related to three specific target populations, including new Canadians, persons with disabilities and youth. Following are the issues identified for each target population:

Labour market issues facing new Canadians in Hamilton:

- Skilled immigrants are underemployed or unemployed
- Internationally trained immigrants are unable to achieve licensing or recognition of their credentials
- There is a need for occupational specific language training

Labour market issues facing Persons with Disabilities in Hamilton:

- It is important to continue supporting the transition to employment of persons with disabilities
- Competitive work environments are difficult places for consumers of mental health services. Hamilton needs to provide alternative work environments for people with mental disabilities.

Labour market issues facing Youth in Hamilton:

- Not enough on-the-job training opportunities
- High-skilled youth are out-migrating to other regions/cities
- Employers need enhanced incentives to hire and train youth
- High school students unable to achieve success with new Ontario curriculum will leave school and enter the workforce without a Grade 12 diploma. This group needs enhanced employment support services.

Issues and recommendations surrounding literacy and basic skills, as well as employment readiness were also identified in the report. These included:

- Gap in basic skills upgrading for high risk youth under 19
- Need to enhance the literacy skills of workers in the workplace
- Certificate requirement for many occupations are too high and exclude lower skilled workers
- Need for an impartial 'one-stop' information, assessment and referral centre in Hamilton
- Need for services that provide a range of interventions to disadvantaged and unemployed clients eg. life skills, training, enhanced employment support
- Uniform standards are needed for client service
- Community raised concern about the decreased access to funding for training
- Lack of access to affordable daycare

4.2 HR Matters Report

As a result of initiatives from HTAB business plan in 1999, City of Hamilton Economic Development Department with support from HRDC and HTAB commissioned a report with purpose of "examining the long-term implications for the city's economy arising from an aging population and to recommend actions to counter any negative consequences". Six industry clusters were identified, including Manufacturing, Agriculture, Aerotropolis, Health and Biotech, Information and Computer Technology and Film. A business plan was also developed (*HR Matters II* - June 2003), based on findings from the original *HR Matters* report.

The goals stated in the *HR Matters* report are as follows:

- Secure high quality human resources for Hamilton's businesses
- Collectively create a policy framework and a community infrastructure that support improvements in both quantity and quality of the labour supply pool
- Ensure that Hamilton has the workforce it needs to achieve its economic development goals

The report identified five key theme areas, three of which are specifically related to the provision of local employment services. These three themes include, facilitating school-to-work transitions, improve skills, and build the labour supply. Similar to the Hamilton Training and Advisory Board's Local Area Plan, each theme area identified in the *HR Matters* report has specific strategies, challenges and priorities aligned with it. Following is an overview from each of the three relevant theme areas:

TABLE 7: Relevant Strategies identified in the HR Matters II Business Plan

FACILITATING SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION		
Strategy	What can be done	Challenges
• Support local high school transition programs - co-op education, OYAP, job shadowing, work experience	• Establish education business working teams to develop and deploy programs that meet the needs of all stakeholders and bridge workforce supply and demand imbalances	• Coordinating and sustaining cooperation
• Introduce additional transition programs/ resources at elementary and middle school	• Focus on age appropriate student programs and services that provide awareness of and exposure to the world of work - e.g. Bio Tech in a Box, Mad Science, Skilled Trades, Local Labour Market Information, Clusters of Innovation	• *HR Matters* ability to influence the curriculum may be limited
• Increase the number of guidance councilors in local schools	• Support school board/ teacher efforts to secure funds to hire additional councilors and student services personnel	• New territory, uncertain pay-off
• Create apprenticeships	• Apprenticeships and cooperative work programs will assist in easing the transition between the school and work	• Build partnerships of providers and employers

IMPROVE SKILLS		
Strategy	What Can Be Done	Challenges
• Facilitate Skills Training	• Assist those who are under-utilized in the workforce and who want to upgrade their skills or education. Supplement skills training offered in schools to ease transition (back) into the workforce and to help secure employment	• Very diffuse and diverse groups with different needs and expectations

BUILD THE LABOUR SUPPLY		
Strategy	What Can Be Done	Challenges
• Facilitate and encourage new Canadians	• Utilization of existing skills • Increase efforts to attract new Canadians	• Attracting new Canadians depends on utilizing them to their fullest, which is sometimes constrained by professional associations. City would be limited in their ability to influence these requirements, but this could be part of strategy as per *HR Matters I* Report • Several initiatives currently exist and can be expanded to other clusters
• Support under-utilized workers	• Facilitate those wishing to improve their participation in the workforce	• Likely diverse and diffuse groups: women, immigrants, layoff, retirees etc. with different perspectives and motivations

The report identified five key theme areas, three of which are specifically related to the provision of local employment services. These three themes include, facilitating school-to-work transitions, improve skills, and build the labour supply. Similar to the Hamilton Training and Advisory Board's Local Area Plan, each theme area identified in the *HR Matters* report has specific strategies, challenges and priorities aligned with it. Following is an overview from each of the three relevant theme areas:

4.3 The Social Vision for Hamilton

The report, *A Social Vision for Hamilton*, was prepared at the request of Social and Public Health Department of the New City of Hamilton by the Caledon Institute (2003). Independent of the HTAB and *HR Matters* reports, the study was needed to determine those areas that required priority attention in order to create a vital community.

Hamilton has with its new economic plan moved towards a cluster model. The cluster model is based on the notion that economic growth requires both a physical and social infrastructure. It is also based on the premise that economic progress is not possible unless one deals with skills development, social needs and the quality of life. Ultimately it is believed that a good economic policy yields the finances needed to deal with social needs which then in turn results in growth.

This is an ambitious plan that involves many stakeholders and many goals. What is crucial to the process is its insistence on addressing a range of issues as opposed to a single focus; holistic as compared to compartmentalized. The report promotes a multi-sector process with long-term perspectives. It also focuses on minimizing duplication by integrating and coordinating various services sectors.

The social vision identifies three flagship initiatives: children and families, skills development and affordable housing. Instability in one of these areas causes instability in the other two; so with respect to any employment scenario they all come into play. The goals of each flagship are simple yet succinct as indicated in the table below. As well all the initiatives identify the review of employment policies, the creation of a coordinating mechanism, the engagement of citizens, the further gathering of data on exemplary models as key plans of action to achieve success.

TABLE 8: Flagship Initiatives Identified in the Social Vision for Hamilton

	Goal
Children & Families	To ensure that all children have the best possible start in life by meeting their basic needs and by providing a range of opportunities for physical, intellectual, emotional and social development
Skill Development	To ensure that the knowledge and skills of workers match the needs of the core clusters To assist workers who have been marginalized from the labour market gain access to opportunities for meaningful employment
Affordable Housing	To increase the supply of affordable housing in the City of Hamilton To promote the availability of affordable housing through such measures as rent subsidies, funds for home improvement and assistance with the payment of the first and last month To ensure the availability of emergency and shelter arrangements in order to reduce substantially the rate of homelessness in Hamilton

4.4 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- The HTAB Local Area Plan identifies access to apprenticeship opportunities as a barrier to employment in the skilled trades.

- With respect to school-to-work transitions, there is a need to provide more experiential learning opportunities for in school youth, and to address the needs of work bound youth as well as those pursuing post-secondary education.

- Many new Canadians in Hamilton require support in achieving licensing requirements and gaining recognition of their credentials. There is also a need for occupational specific language training.

- Many persons with disabilities in Hamilton require continued support in the transition to employment, and flexible work environments.

- Youth in Hamilton require more on-the-job training opportunities. High-skilled youth are out-migrating to other regions/cities, and employers need enhanced incentives to hire and train youth. High school students who are unable to achieve success with the new Ontario curriculum will leave school and enter the workforce without a Grade 12 diploma. This group needs enhanced employment support services.

- The HTAB Local Area Plan recommends an impartial "one-stop" information, assessment and referral centre in Hamilton, and for services that provide a range of supports and interventions for disadvantaged clients (i.e. life-skills, training, and enhanced employment supports)

- With respect to school-to-work transition, the *HR Matters* Business Plan recommends strategies to attract and retain graduates, provide more work experience programs, and to educate youth around the "world of work" during elementary and middle school.

- The *Social Vision of Hamilton* (Caledon Institute, 2003) is based on the premise that economic progress is not possible unless we deal with skills development, social needs and quality of life. . It also focuses on minimizing duplication by integrating and coordinating various service sectors.

5.0 EXISTING RESEARCH ON LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Over the years the SPRC has been extensively involved in studying and addressing local employment issues. Considering only the past five years, the SPRC has produced a number of reports that highlight issues and barriers to employment and access to employment services in Hamilton.

While some of our work in this area considered employment issues generally, many of our completed reports and ongoing research relates to a number of special client groups, including: internationally trained professionals and trades people, persons with disabilities, and youth (including in school and at-risk youth).

Our history of work in this area has given the SPRC the opportunity to work directly with local employment service providers and, consequently, to develop a solid understanding of this service sector. We have also developed working relationships with some of the formal networks that exist within the employment service sector, conducting research with the Hamilton Youth Employment Network (YEN), the local ODSP transfer payment agencies.

This section of the report focuses on five separate reports produced by the SPRC, including:

- *Community Consultation on Local Employment Services* (1997)
- *Understanding Youth Unemployment in the Hamilton-Wentworth HRDC Management Area* (1999)
- *Accessing Employment and Employment Supports in Hamilton: Issues and Barriers for Persons with Disabilities* (2001)
- *Hamilton Youth Employment Summit - Report to the Community* (Produced by the YMCA of Hamilton and the SPRC, 2003)
- *Assessing the Feasibility of Developing an Employment Resource Centre for Internationally Trained Professionals and Trades People* (2003)

Following is a summary of findings and recommendations from previous research, that relate directly to the objectives of this study. In section 11.0 of this report (Discussion and Key Findings), trends and issues emerging from previous research will be considered in the context of findings from the current study.

5.1 General Trends in Employment Services

In 1997, the SPRC produced a report entitled: *Community Consultation on Local Employment Services*. Funded through HRDC, the report highlights the processes and findings from our consultation on local employment services.

The goal of the consultation was to identify approaches that make best use of HRDC resources and provides the greatest benefit to those in search of employment in this community. The consultation process incorporated surveys and focus groups with local employment service providers and consumers of services.

> In 1997, there was concern that the system of employment supports was not well coordinated, and may be less so if it becomes more competitive.

A number of key themes emerged from this report, focused on gaps in local employment services and service coordination. With respect to gaps in service, the need for more work experience programs figured prominently. Service providers consulted as part of the study suggested various work placement scenarios and employer incentives as the most viable options in terms of employment programs. This is consistent with participants views that a lack of work experience represents a substantial barrier to employment.

In addition work experience programs, the study identified the need for more complete and accessible information on local programs and service, and more support for job-search activities. This was echoed by both clients of local employment services as well as service providers.

At the time of the study (1997), there was concern that the system of employment support is not well coordinated and may be less so if it becomes more competitive. There was a concern that the system needs a clear " map" particularly as it changes and that the process of consultation should continue in a structured way to more effectively respond to success or failure of the change taking place.

5.2 Employment Issues and Service for Youth

In 1999 the SPRC produced a report entitled: *Understanding Youth Unemployment in the Hamilton-Wentworth HRDC Management Area*. This report provides a snapshot of youth in Hamilton and their connection to the local labour market. The report considers youth employment needs in the context of our local employment service system, and provides a set of recommendations for positive change.

More recently, in June 2003, the SPRC contributed to research supporting the first Hamilton Youth Employment Summit. The main objective of the summit was to identify and develop strategies to address the issues and barriers to employment faced by youth in Hamilton.

In preparation for the summit, the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton conducted a pre-summit consultation with key stakeholders, including local employers, educators, employment service

providers and youth. Findings from surveys and focus groups were incorporated with proceedings from two community forums, and formed the basis of the report to the community.

A number of gaps in youth employment services were identified through both pieces of research. Specifically, both studies identified the need for better access to information on local employment programs and services, and more opportunities to gain work experience.

> There is a need for more collaboration between schools, local employers, employment service providers and government.

Both studies also identified the need for more collaboration between schools, local employers, employment service providers and government. Pre-employment and life skills training was also seen as a need among youth. Findings suggest that this should be provided through school curriculums, rather than after a young person enters the labour market.

5.3 Employment Issues and Service for New Canadians

In September 2003, the SPRC completed a report entitled: *Assessing the Feasibility of Developing an Employment Resource Centre for Internationally Trained Professionals and Trades People*. The report assesses a range of employment service types and service delivery models. The purpose of the study was to determine the feasibility of developing a resource centre for internationally trained professional and trades people in Hamilton.

Through the course of the study, consultations were conducted with internationally trained professionals and trades people (both unemployed and employed in their field), local employment service providers, local employers and representatives from provincial licensing bodies.

> An issue specific to internationally trained professionals and trades people is that of professional licensing.

An issue specific to internationally trained professionals and trades people is that of professional licensing. While any changes in the licensing processes for specific professions must happen through the corresponding professional association, employment service sectors and local government can lobby and offer support in developing more streamlined processes.

Access to up-to-date information on employment services and labour market information was identified as a gap in local employment services. This includes information on licensing and accreditation processes. A lack of opportunities to gain Canadian work experience was also seen as a gap in local services, identifying the need for more work experience programs. For new Canadians, exposure to Canadian "work culture" and sector specific language greatly increases their likelihood of securing employment in their field.

In terms of matching clients with the most appropriate program or service, the report recommends a centralized assessment and referral system, similar to that implemented in the neighbouring community of Kitchener-Waterloo.

5.4 Employment Issues and Service for Persons with Disabilities

In 2000, with funding through The Ministry of Community and Social Services - Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) - Employment Support Program the SPRC produced a report entitled: *Accessing Employment and Employment Supports in Hamilton: Issues and Barriers for Persons with Disabilities*. The study identifies some of the employment issues and circumstances faced by persons with disabilities in our community.

Consistent with the focus of the Employment Support Program, the study has a specific focus on employment support services. Access to information on employment programs and services was again identified as a gap in local service. The report recommended that an effective system of disseminating information about employment support services and programs be developed which is accessible to and inclusive of persons with a broad range of disabilities levels and types.

Reliable and accessible transportation is essential to securing and maintaining employment.

Following access to information, the second most significant barrier to accessing employment and employment service in Hamilton was transportation. Reliable and accessible transportation is essential to securing and maintaining employment. Where this is not available, transportation becomes a significant barrier.

A lack of work placement opportunities was also identified as a gap in local employment services for persons with disabilities. Where work placements are available, findings suggest that individualized supports to maintain employment are not always adequate or in place.

5.5 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- In each of the five studies conducted by the SPRC, access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment services was identified as a gap in local services.
- In local research focused on youth, new Canadians, persons with disabilities as well as the general population, a lack of work experience was identified as a gap in the local employment services system.
- A key theme throughout previous research on local employment services is the need for a more coordinated model of service delivery. The most recent study considering the needs of internationally-trained professionals and trades people recommended that Hamilton adopt a service delivery model similar to that in the neighbouring community of Kitchener-Waterloo.

- A key theme throughout previous research is that more coordination is required between the local employment service sector and other systems and institutions. Specifically identified were school boards, local employers, and various levels of government.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

This section of the report examines an alternative model of employment service delivery to what currently exists locally. Hamilton currently maintains a fragmented approach to delivering employment services. While a range of services and service types are provided locally, there is no formal coordination of services.

Informal networks of local service providers have evolved out of necessity, where service providers share information on programs and services, and develop informal referral networks. These networks however, fall short of maximizing the impact of the local employment services sector.

For individuals attempting to connect with the local labour market, the current service system may result in frustration and a substantial investment of time. Similarly, employment service providers may spend valuable resources providing services that do not meet the unique needs of the client.

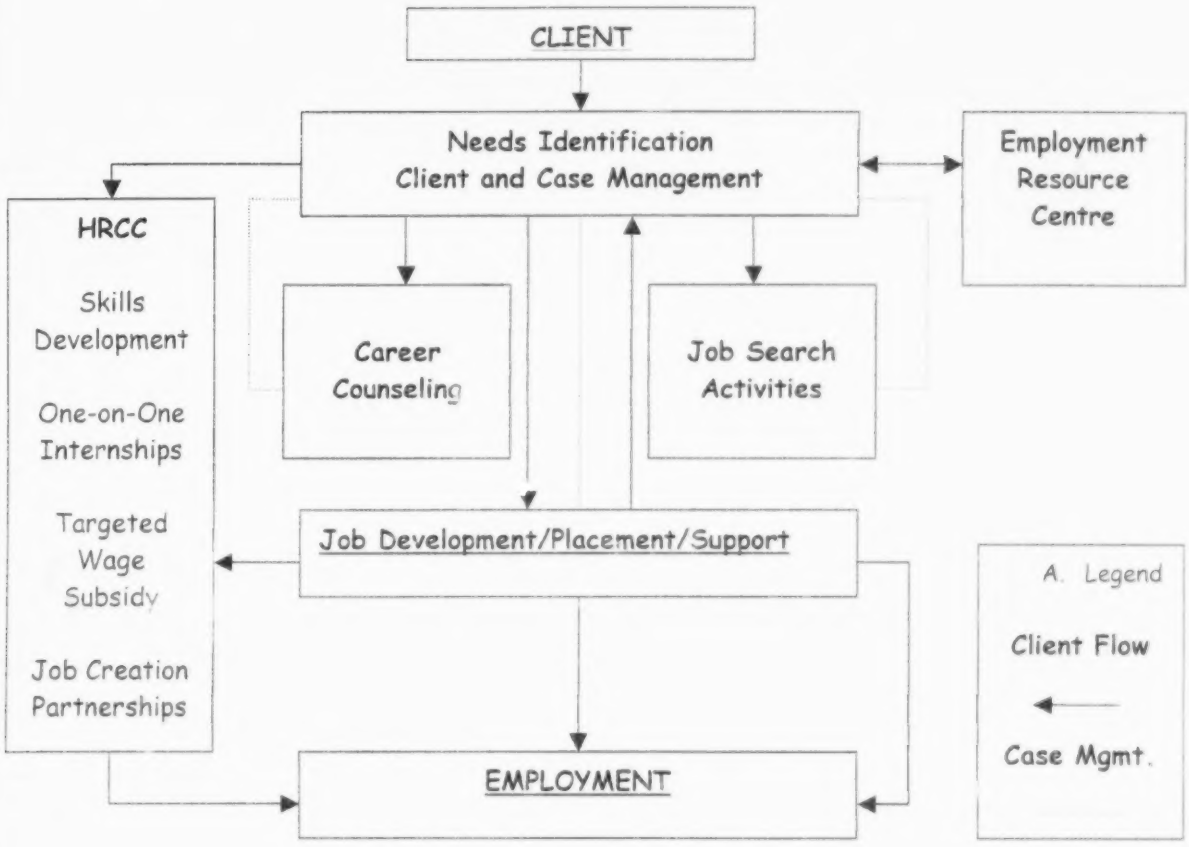
In efforts to understand the respective benefits and drawbacks of alternative service delivery models, we compare Hamilton with the neighbouring region of Kitchener-Waterloo. In December 2002, with funding through the Kitchener Human Resource Centre of Canada, the YMCA launched the Employment Assistance Services (EAS). While the first phase of implementation focused on coordinating employment services primarily for new Canadians, other centres are being developed to support youth and persons with disabilities.

Essentially, the EAS provides centralized assessment of employment service needs, and referrals to the most appropriate local services. Following is an overview of the Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services. Much of the information provided is based on interviews with EAS staff and staff of local employment service in Kitchener-Waterloo (SPRC, 2003).

6.1 The Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services

The Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services (EAS) provides a level of coordination to a previously fragmented employment service sector similar to Hamilton. As shown in CHART 8, the EAS is the initial point of contact for clients accessing local employment services. If a client approaches a local service directly, they will be directed to the EAS for assessment and referral.

CHART 1: The Kitchener-Waterloo EAS Service Delivery Model



EAS staff assist clients in the identification of employment needs and the development of a Return to Work Action Plan (RTWAP). Based on a comprehensive assessment of individual client needs, an RTWAP directs the client to the most appropriate local services.

Using a case management approach, EAS staff liaise with local service providers to coordinate the client's action plan and monitor the client's progress. EAS staff support the client as they progress through their RTWAP, addressing any problems or concerns that may occur. When a client completes a specific employment program, they return to the EAS for an assessment of further service needs. According to EAS staff, clients generally require more that one intervention/referral. Case management software, Contact IV, is used to track a client's service usage.

Once a client's RTWAP is completed, EAS staff determine his or her employment status. If a client's RTWAP is closed as "not employed", EAS staff follow-up after 12 weeks to reassess employment status. This mechanism allows both the EAS and local service providers to measure successful outcomes of their programs and services.

In addition to assessment and referral functions, the EAS maintains an Employment Resource Centre. The centre provides employment and labour market information relevant to newcomers, and offers a supportive self-service alternative.

This model requires strong connections between the EAS and local employment service providers, for the purposes of monitoring client progress and identifying the most appropriate services for specific clients. EAS staff must maintain an in-depth understanding of specific program and service requirements, and what types of clients benefit most from a particular service. This ensures that EAS staff provide the most effective referrals based on an assessment of client needs.

6.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of the EAS Model

There are three key benefits of this service delivery model over a fragmented approach. First, by tracking client progress through a case management approach, the EAS model provides accurate and reliable data on both the success of and demand for specific services and service types. This will ultimately create a feedback loop, informing the local employment service system of its strengths and needs for change in service delivery.

Second, this model ensures that clients are connected with local service that would best meet their needs. By reducing or eliminating "bad fits" between clients and services, this model provides a cost savings to both clients and service providers, in terms of time and resources.

A third benefit of the EAS model over a fragmented approach is a reduction in administration required of service providers. Clients arrive at a local agency based on assessed needs. This eliminates the need for service providers to conduct internal assessment of clients. Client data is also managed by the EAS, and is no longer collected by individual agencies.

In terms of drawbacks associated with this model, only HRCC funded programs and services require a referral from the EAS. While this includes approximately twenty local programs, it means that the local employment service system is only partly coordinated.

A second potential drawback in implementing a central assessment and referral model is the ability of funders to project the demand for service, and provide adequate resources to meet the demand. In Kitchener-Waterloo, the EAS was expected to service three hundred and twenty-five (325) clients in their first year of operation. In fact, seven hundred and forty-one (741) clients were served during their first year of operation. Similarly, the resource centre component of the EAS was expected to receive approximately four hundred (400) clients during the first year. The actual figures after one year of operation were over nine hundred (900) visits.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- By tracking client progress through a case management approach, the EAS model provides accurate and reliable data on both the success of and demand for specific services and service types. This will ultimately create a feedback loop, informing the local employment service system of its strengths and needs for change in service delivery.

- By reducing or eliminating "bad fits" between clients and services, this model provides a cost savings to both clients and service providers, in terms of time and resources.

- The EAS system eliminates the need for service providers to conduct internal assessment of clients. Client data is also managed by the EAS, and is no longer collected by individual agencies.

- Currently, the EAS model in Kitchener-Waterloo only incorporates HRCC funded programs and services. While this includes approximately twenty local programs, it means that the local employment service system is only partly coordinated.

7.0 SURVEY OF SERVICE USERS

This section of the report highlights findings from our survey of clients of local employment agencies. in total, one hundred and one (T = 101) surveys were conducted. Surveys were conducted through a one-on-one interview format, in five local employment service agencies.

In efforts to reflect the diversity in Hamilton and more accurately reflect the employment needs of specific populations, surveys were conducted in agencies which serve youth, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, as well as the general population. Specifically, approximately 20 surveys were conducted at each of the following agencies: PATH Employment Services; Settlement and Integration service Organization (SISO); Careerworx; the East Hamilton Employment Resource Centre, and; the Downtown Employment Resource Centre.

7.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Of the one hundred and one (T = 101) clients surveyed, fifty-seven percent (57%) were male, while forty-three percent (43%) were female. A total of fifty-seven percent (57%) reported being single, while forty-three percent (43%) were either married or living common law. Forty-one percent (41%) of clients surveyed reported having children living with them.

CHART 2: Age Distribution of Clients Surveyed

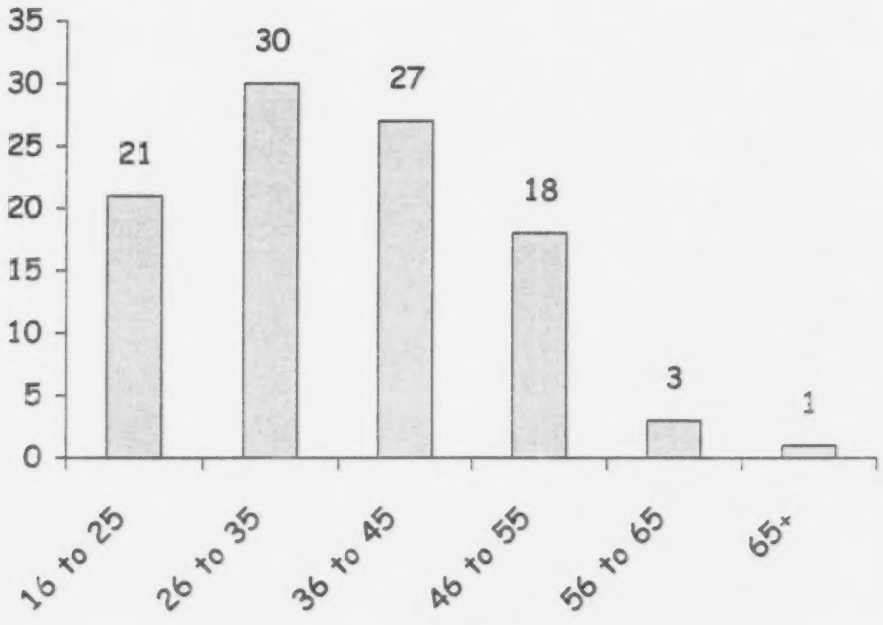
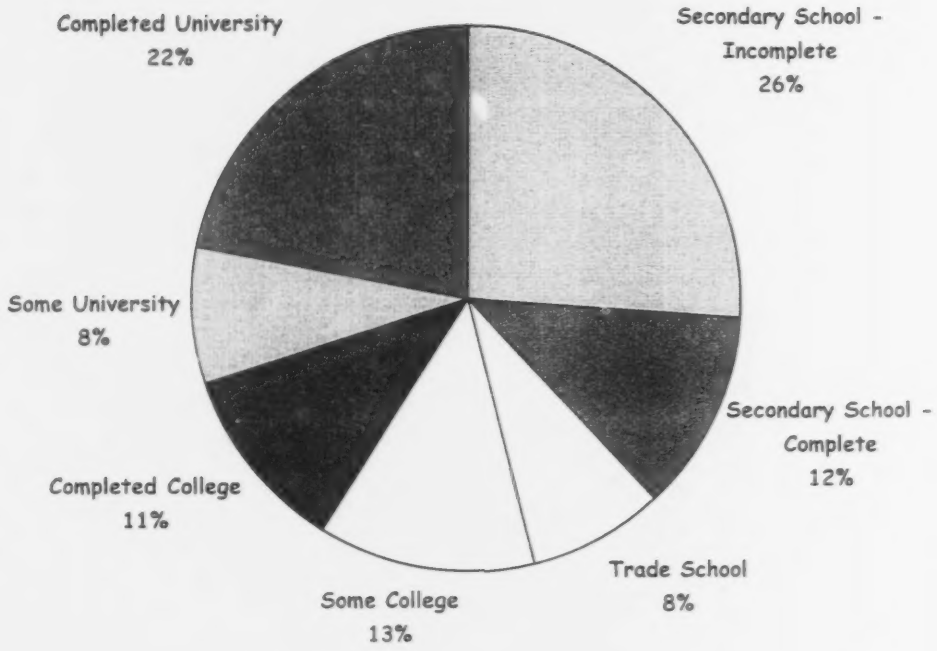


CHART 2 shows the age distribution of those clients surveyed. The majority of clients surveyed were between the ages of 26 and 45 years (57%). Also notable is that twenty-one percent (21%) were between 16 and 25 years of age, and twenty-two percent (22%) were over the age of 45.

Clients surveyed were also asked to identify their level of education. CHART 3 Shows the education levels of respondents. Twenty-six percent (26%) of those surveyed reported not having completed secondary school, while twelve percent (12%) reported secondary school completion as their highest level of education.

Twenty-one percent of respondents (21%) reported having completed some college or university, while thirty-three percent (33%) reported having completed a degree or diploma in college or university. Eight percent (8%) of those surveyed reported trade school as their highest level of education.

CHART 3: Education Levels of Clients Surveyed



7.2 Employment Status and Expectations

The high levels of education reported as college or university completion (33%) may be explained by the number of newcomers to Canada included in the survey. Although newcomers experience disproportionately high levels of unemployment in Canada, they often immigrate with high levels of education.

In total, thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents were not Canadian born, with forty-seven percent of those residing in Canada for less than one year. Thirty percent (30%) of those not born in Canada had resided in Canada from between one and four years. In terms of education levels, those surveyed who were not Canadian born, constituted sixty-one percent (61%) of those who reported completing college or university.

The majority of clients surveyed were not receiving financial assistance (65%). Of those who were receiving financial assistance at the time of the survey (35%), fifty-nine percent (59%) were receiving Ontario Works Benefits; thirty-two percent (32%) were receiving Employment Insurance.

and three percent (3%) were receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits, Canadian Pension Plan for the Disabled (CPPD), and Workers Safety and Insurance board Benefits (WSIB).

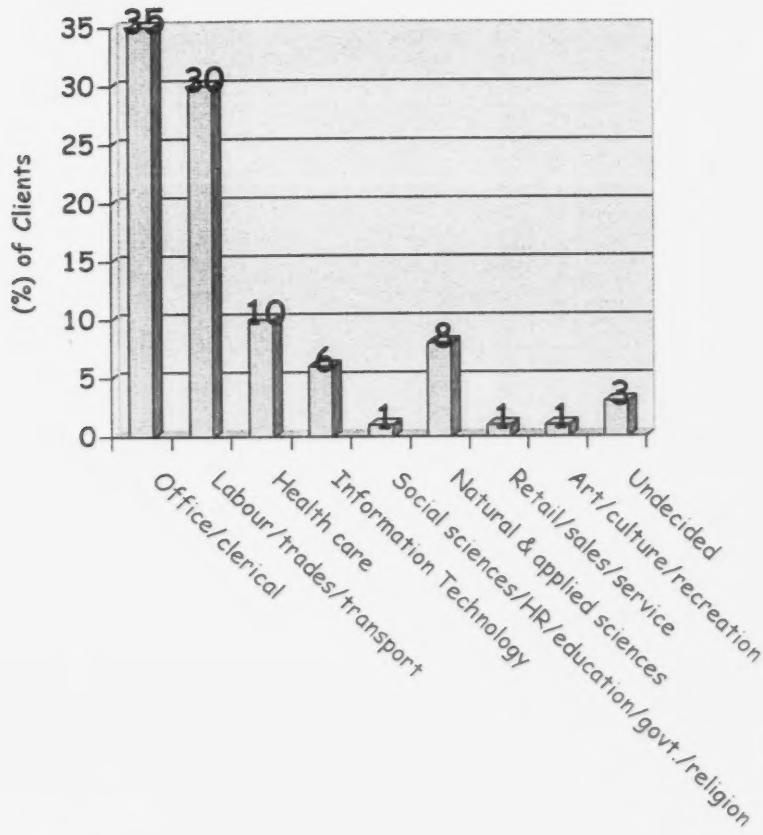
Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents reported having a disability that affected the type of work they could accept.

At the time of the survey, seventy-one percent of respondents (71%) identified themselves as unemployed. Thirteen percent of respondents (13%) were employed part-time, nine percent (9%) were employed on contract or in a temporary position, and seven percent (7%) were employed full-time.

The clients surveyed were asked what type of work they were looking for. As shown in CHART 4, the majority of respondents were interested in "office/clerical" work (35%) or "labour/trades/transportation (30%).

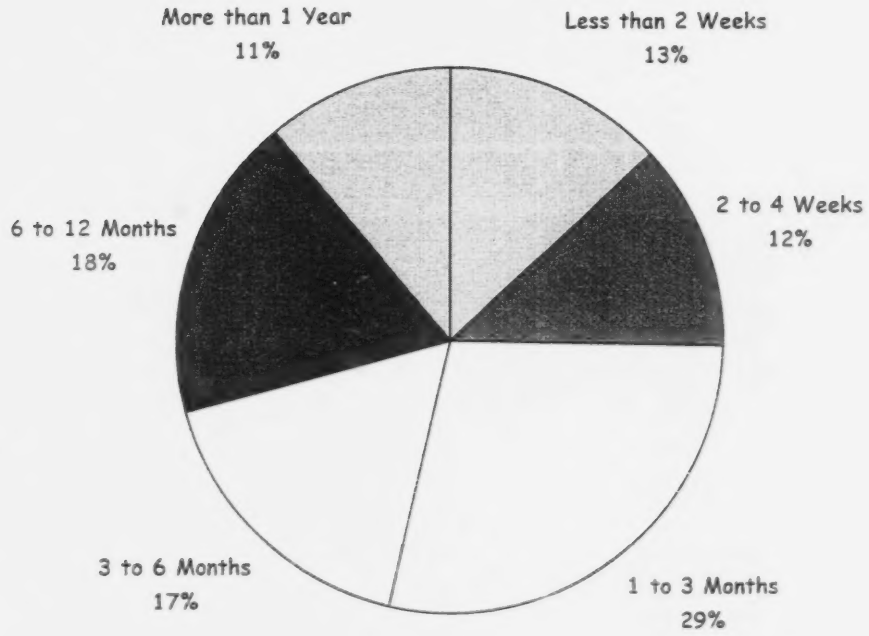
On the whole, respondents reported a high level of experience in their career field, with seventy percent (70%) having more than two years experience. In terms of wage expectations, thirteen percent (13%) of respondents expected between minimum wage and $10.00 per hour; fifty-one percent (51%) between $10 and $15.00 per hour; twenty-three percent (23%) between $15.00 and $20.00 per hour, and ; thirteen percent (13%) of respondents expected a wage of more than $20.00 per hour.

CHART 4: Preferred Type of Work Among Clients Surveyed



Clients of employment service agencies surveyed during the study had been looking for work for varied lengths of time. As shown in CHART 5, only thirteen percent (13%) had been looking for work for less than two weeks at the time of the survey, and only eleven percent (11%) for more than one year. The majority of clients surveyed (63%) had been looking for work from between one month and one year.

CHART 5: Duration of Job-Search Among Clients Surveyed



7.3 Awareness and Experience with Local Employment Services

One of the objectives of the study was to assess the level of awareness of local employment programs and services among clients of employment agencies. survey respondents were presented a list of nine specific service types. For each service type, respondents were asked "are you aware that this type of program/service is available in Hamilton?" If yes, "have you used this type of program/service?" If the respondent had used the specific type of employment program/service, they were then asked to rate its usefulness on a scale from 1 to 3, 1 being "not useful", and 3 being "very useful".

TABLE 9 Describes the findings from this section of the survey. Among the clients surveyed (T = 101), the level of awareness of service types was low. The average level of awareness of across the nine specific service types was thirty-two percent (32%), ranging from fifty-seven percent (57%) awareness of "job bank kiosks", to twenty-six percent (26%) awareness of "self-employment assistance".

TABLE 9: Awareness, Use and Value of Specific Service Types

Service Type	Aware of Service	Have Used the Service	Service was Helpful	
			No	Very
Job bank kiosk	57%	94%	23%	36%
Job-search training	47%	66%	27%	53%
Resume Writing	52%	96%	15%	59%
Self-employment assistance	26%	35%	61%	22%
Job-finding clubs	38%	63%	24%	41%
Apprenticeship opportunities	30%	13%	70%	15%
Job-skills training	37%	51%	38%	34%
Language training	28%	29%	65%	13%
On-line supports	38%	87%	26%	34%

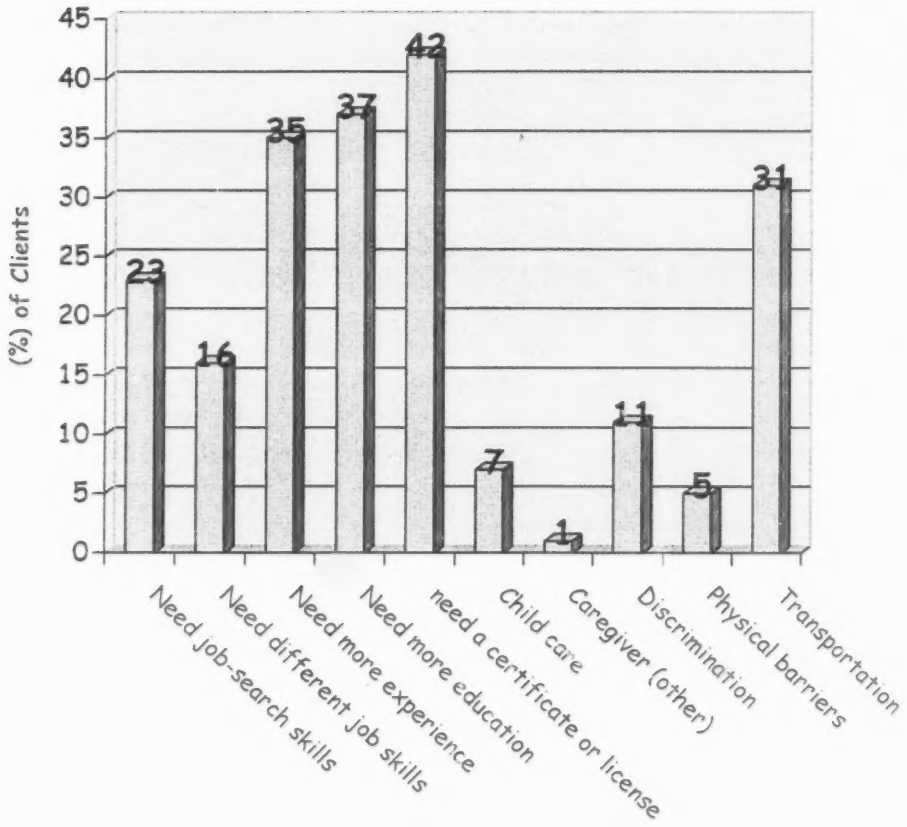
The majority of respondents had visited more than one local employment agency as part of their job-search. When asked why they visited more than one agency, respondents most often identified "exploring, to see what other agencies had to offer, and collecting information from as many sources as possible to increase their opportunities to find employment. This seems to support other findings from this study, as well as findings from previous local research, that suggest the need for a better access to information on local employment program and service opportunities.

7.4 Barriers to Employment and Service Needs

In terms of barriers to employment, clients surveyed were asked "what do you think is preventing you from getting the type of job you are looking for?" respondents were given a range of potential barriers and asked to check all that applied. An "other" option was also included, so respondents could identify barriers not included on the list. As shown in CHART 6, forty-two percent of respondents (42%) reported needing a specific certificate or license to qualify for the job they are looking for. Thirty-seven percent (37%) felt they needed more education and thirty-five percent (35%) more experience. Consistent with findings from previous research, transportation was also identified as a barrier to employment by a number of respondents (31%). This seems to result from a combination of factors, including the financial capacity individuals, and the routing of public

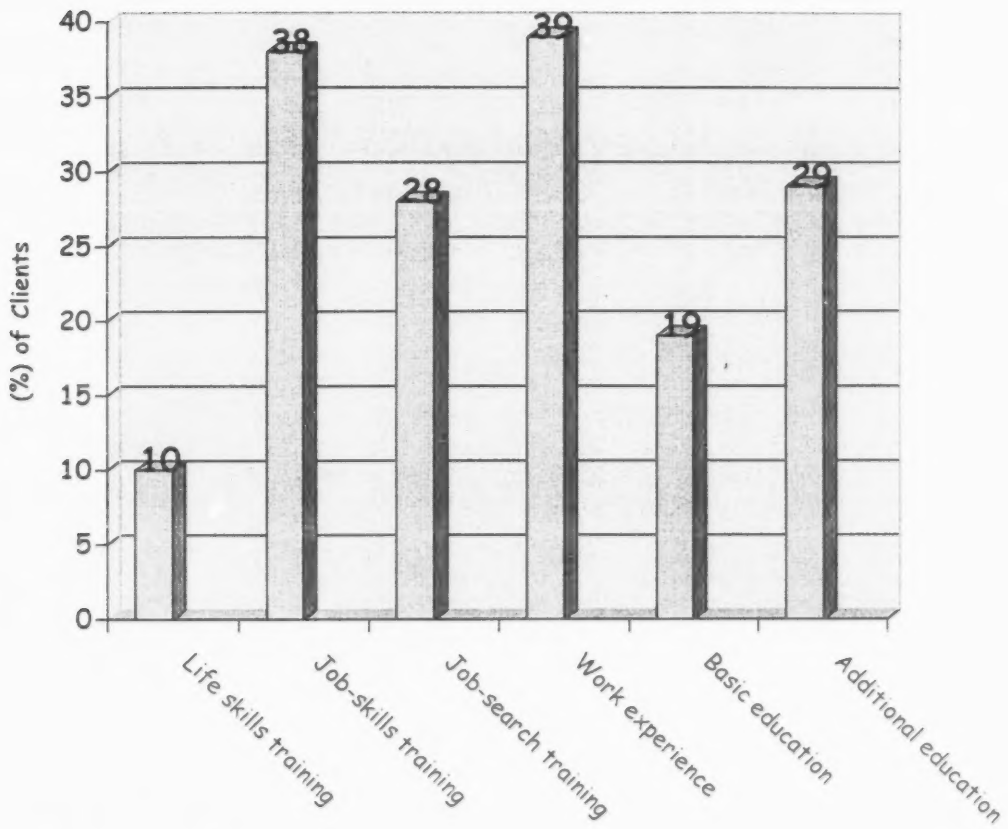
transportation in Hamilton. While a full study has not been conducted, anecdotal evidence suggests that public transportation does not reach industrial areas where many jobs exist.

CHART 6: Client Perceptions of Barriers to Employment



Respondents were asked "what skills, experience or training would help you to get a job?" Again, respondents were asked to identify "all that applied" from a list provided, with the opportunity to identify other supports not included on the list. As presented in CHART 7, thirty-nine percent (39%) identified "work experience", while thirty-eight percent (38%) identified "job-skills training". While almost all respondents had at least some experience in their field, with seventy percent (70%) having between 2 and 10 years experience in their field, work experience is still perceived as a substantial barrier to employment.

CHART 7: Client Perceptions of Support Needs



Survey respondents were given the opportunity to express in their own words, "what type of employment service would be most valuable in helping someone find work in Hamilton?" Through an analysis of responses, three themes emerged. Specifically, respondents suggested the need for more one-on-one individualized service, more emphasis on job-search training, and by connecting or referring clients directly to employers.

7.5 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- Among the clients surveyed (T = 101), the level of awareness of service types was low. The average level of awareness of across the nine specific service types was thirty-two percent (32%), ranging from fifty-seven percent (57%) awareness of "job bank kiosks", to twenty-six percent (26%) awareness of "self-employment assistance".

- The majority of respondents had visited more than one local employment agency as part of their job-search. When asked why, respondents most often identified "exploring", to see what other agencies had to offer, and collecting information from as many sources as possible to increase their opportunities to find employment.

- Consistent with findings from previous research, transportation was also identified as a barrier to employment by a number of respondents (31%).

- Clients were asked "what skills, experience or training would help you to get a job?" Thirty-nine percent (39%) identified "work experience", while thirty-eight percent (38%) identified "job-skills training".

- When asked "what type of employment service would be most valuable in helping someone find work in Hamilton?" respondents suggested the need for more one-on-one individualized service, more emphasis on job-search training, and by connecting or referring clients directly to employers.

8.0 SURVEY OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

This section of the report provides an overview of findings from our survey of local employment service providers. Surveys were sent by fax to seventy (70) employment service agencies in Hamilton. In total, forty-four (T = 44) surveys were returned, representing a response rate of sixty-three percent (63%).

The survey was designed to collect information and the perspectives of local employment service providers on their client population and services they provide, trends in local employment services identified through previous research, and approaches to service coordination and case management.

8.1 Characteristics of Service Providers Surveyed

The survey provided a list of ten specific service types and respondents were asked to identify which of the services were provided through their agency. An "other" category was also included to capture those services not included in the list. Respondents were also asked to identify whether or not clients had to qualify for specific services.

As show in TABLE 2, the services most often provided by those surveyed include "job-search training" (80%), "resume writing" (75%), "labour market information" (61%) and "life-skills/soft skills training" (50%). Those services provided least often by those agencies surveyed, included "apprenticeship programs" (6%), "mentoring programs" (16%) and "language/literacy training" (18%).

For each of the ten services listed, service providers were asked to identify whether specific qualifications were required to participate. For each service, more than half of all service providers surveyed required specific qualification to participate, ranging from fifty percent (50%) to eighty percent (80%) for specific services. Those services most often requiring qualifications were "mentoring programs" (80%) and "co-op programs" (80%).

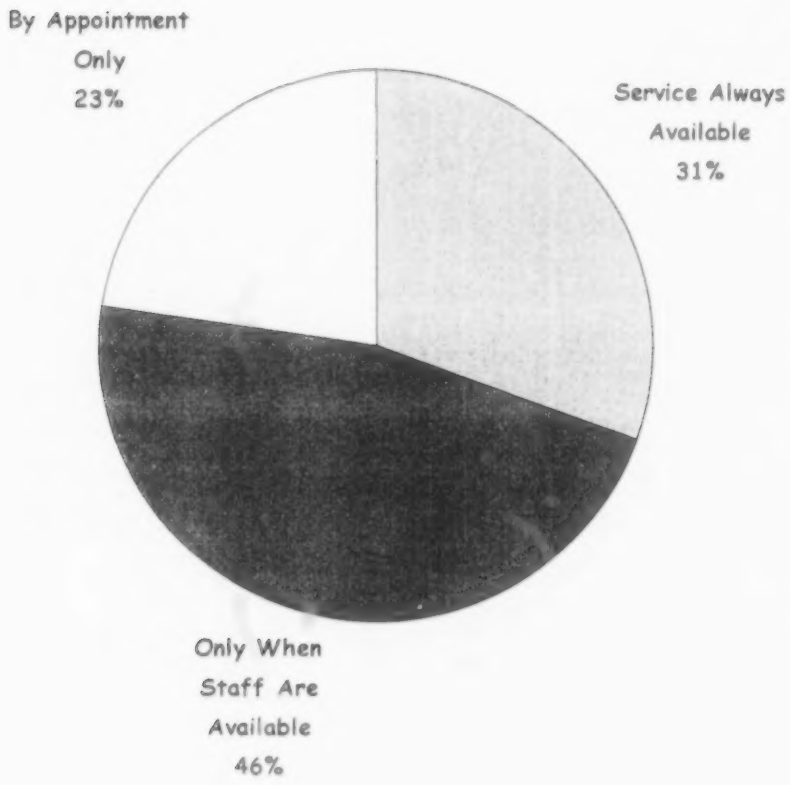
Specific qualifications required to participate in a specific program or service varied. Some services were offered only to recipients of income maintenance programs such as Ontario Works (OW), Employment Insurance (EI), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Other programs and services had age or gender requirements, while others were restricted to specific groups such as students, at-risk youth or new Canadians.

TABLE 10: Services Provided and Qualifications Required

Service Types	Service provided by Survey Respondents	Eligibility Criteria Required
Job-search training	80%	63%
Language/literacy training	18%	67%
Resume writing	75%	57%
Life-skills/soft-skills training	50%	63%
Labour market information	61%	58%
Job-finding club	25%	50%
Co-op program	25%	80%
Apprenticeship program	6%	60%
Mentoring program	16%	80%
Computer skills training	36%	60%

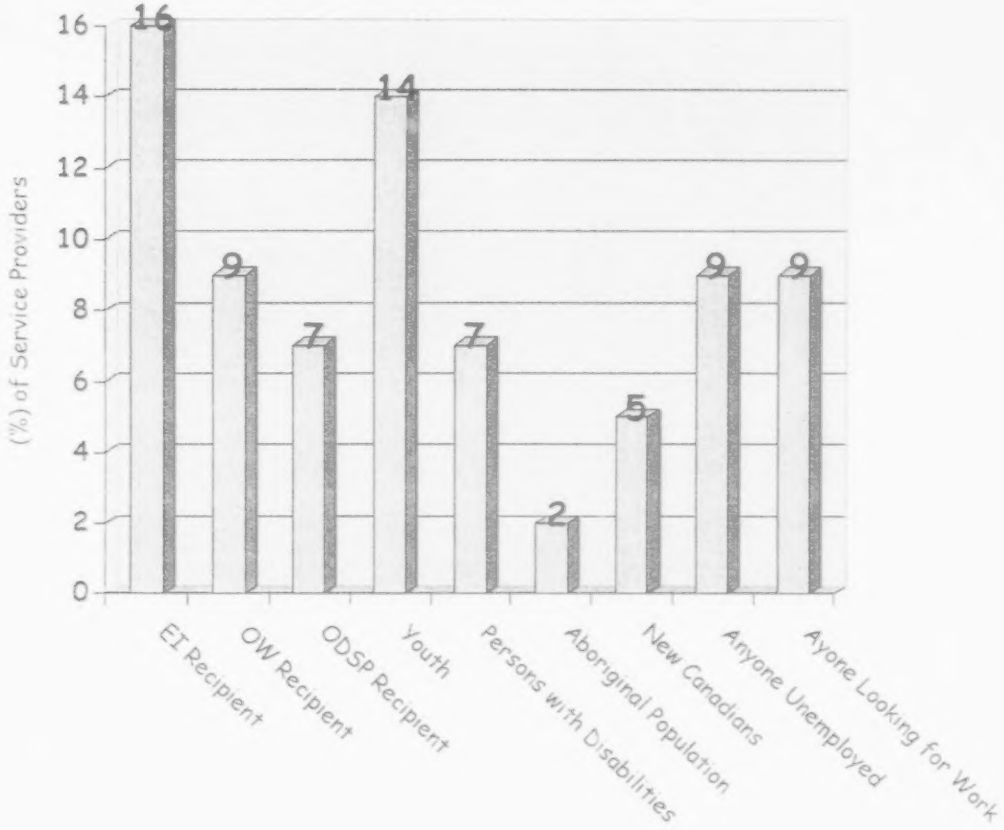
Thirty-two percent (32%) of service providers surveyed offered service in languages other than English. As shown in CHART 8, of those providing service in languages other than English (T = 14), thirty-one percent (31%) provided services consistently, twenty-three percent (23%) by appointment only, and forty-seven percent (47%) "only when staff are available".

CHART 8: Employment Agencies Providing Services in Languages Other than English (T = 14)



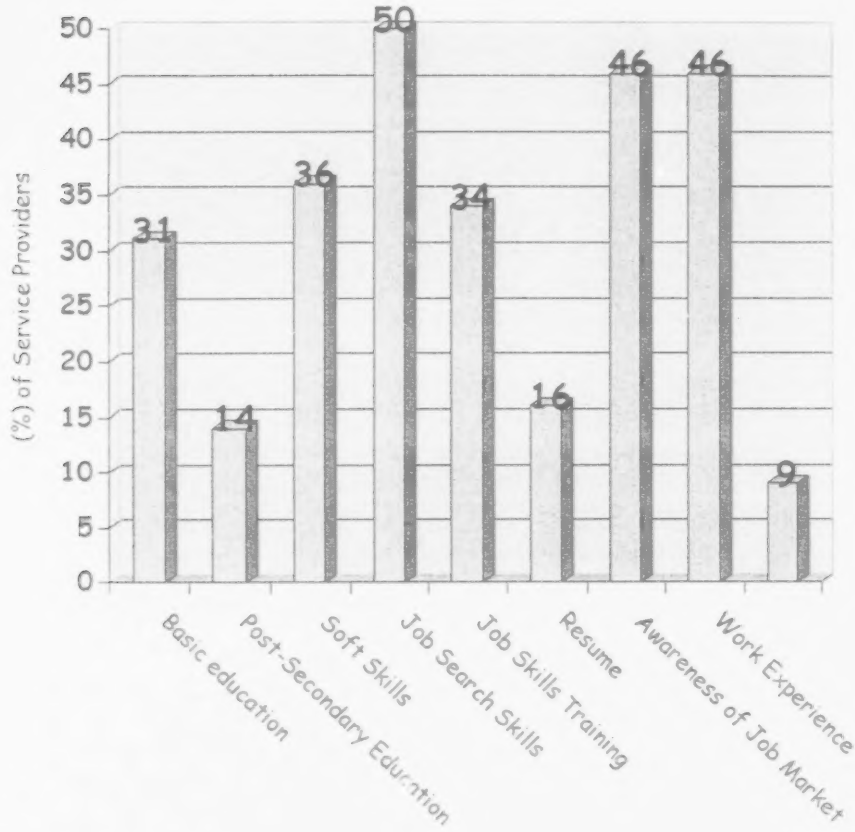
To ensure that service providers serving a range of target populations were included in the survey, respondents were asked to identify their primary target population. As shown in CHART 9, thirty-two percent of service providers surveyed identified recipients of specific income maintenance programs (EI, OW and ODSP) as their primary target population. Youth were the second most common target population identified.

CHART 9: Primary Target Populations of Local Employment Agencies Surveyed



With respect to their target populations, service providers were asked to identify what they felt to be "the most significant need among your client population, in terms of increasing their competitiveness in the local labour market". As shown in CHART 10, "job-search skills (50%), "awareness of employment opportunities" (46%) and "work experience" (46%) were the needs most often identified.

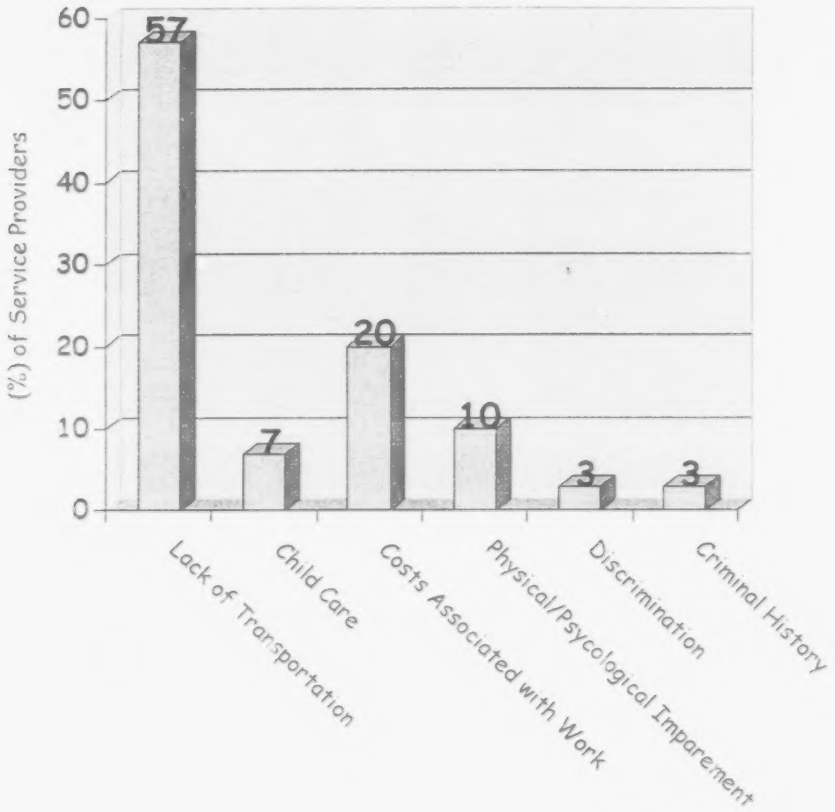
CHART 10: The Most Significant Need Among Clients of Local Employment Services: Service Provider Responses



Individuals may have the skills and education required to hold a position in the local labour force, but other circumstances or lack of supports may interfere with their ability to work. Service providers were asked to identify what they felt was "the most common issue that affects an individual's ability to work.

As shown in CHART 11, service providers most often identified "lack of transportation" (57%), and "costs associated with work" (29%). Additional comments provided by service providers further suggested that financial circumstances may be a barrier for some clients, identifying poverty and housing as issues.

CHART 11: The Most Common Issues Affecting an Individual's Ability to Work: Service Provider Responses



8.2 Assessing Trends in Local Employment Services

As identified in section 5.0, the SPRC has conducted a number of related studies which focus on employment supports for the general population, as well as specific target populations. Specific target populations include persons with disabilities, internationally trained professionals and trades people, and youth (including at-risk youth). Following are the SPRC studies referenced in this section of the report:

- *Community Consultation on Local Employment Services* (1997)
- *Understanding Youth Unemployment in the Hamilton-Wentworth HRDC Management Area* (1999)
- *Accessing Employment and Employment Supports in Hamilton: Issues and Barriers for Persons with Disabilities* (2001)
- *Hamilton Youth Employment Summit - Report to the Community* (2003)
- *Assessing the Feasibility of Developing an Employment Resource Centre for Internationally Trained Professionals and Trades People* (2003)

The second section of the employment service provider's survey was designed to determine whether trends or findings observed in previous SPRC research on local employment services in Hamilton are still relevant today. Specifically, the survey focused on access to information on local employment services, qualifying for local programs and services, job-search skills, work experience programs and skills-training programs.

8.3 Information on Local Employment Services

A lack of complete and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services has been cited through out previous related research. To determine whether or not access to information is still a concern today, service providers were given the following statement and question:

> "both clients and local service providers have identified a lack of information on local employment services and program opportunities. From your perspective, is a lack of information on local employment services still a concern today?"

In total, sixty percent (60%) of respondents believed that access to information is still a concern today. Moreover, ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents felt that "a system that maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information on all local services and programs" would be "a benefit to local service providers".

In terms of specific benefits associated with a comprehensive information system, two key themes emerged from service provider responses. First, one stop access to information would cut down on the resources required by service providers to understand what other local employment programs are available.

> Easy access to information would increase an agency's capacity to make more accurate referrals to other local agencies.

Secondly, easy access to information would increase an agency's capacity to make more accurate referrals to other local agencies.

To determine how service providers envision a coordinated information system, respondents were asked "what is needed to establish a better system of providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services?" An analysis of responses revealed three key aspects of a coordinated information system. Specifically, it should be a web-based system, with adequate access to computers for clients, it should be managed by a central agency or coordinator, and funding must be ongoing as coordinating information on an ever-changing employment service sector is a labour intensive initiative.

8.4 Qualifying for Programs and Services

Specific qualification required for participation in many local employment programs and services has been identified in previous literature as being frustrating for both clients and service providers. In question 1 of the study, between fifty to eighty percent (50% to 80%) specific services had eligibility requirements.

To understand if eligibility requirements are still an issue today, service providers were given the following statement and question:

> "Access to some local employment services and programs is limited by specific requirements for participation. (eg. EI or OW recipients, new Canadians, youth). From your perspective, would the general population benefit from universal access to all local employment programs and services?"

Service providers were asked to rate the benefit of universal access on a four-point scale, 1 being "Not Beneficial" and 5 being "Very Beneficial". In total, fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents felt it would be either "Beneficial" or "Very Beneficial".

Eligibility requirements for programs and services were often seen as "arbitrary barriers to needed supports".

Service providers were then asked to explain their perspectives on universal access to employment programs and services. Three key themes emerged from responses - some pro's and some con's. On the pro side, respondents felt that universal access would result in more opportunities for clients. Eligibility requirements for programs and services were often seen as "arbitrary barriers to needed supports".

Concerns were raised about limited resources for some programs. An open system may result in long waiting lists for some programs. There was strong response from service providers however, that access to programs and services should be based more on "need" and "suitability", than age or connection to an income support program.

8.5 Job-Search Training

Job-search skills have been identified through previous research as both a significant need among client's of local employment services, and as a barrier to employment. To determine if this remains the case today, service providers were given the following statement and question:

> "A lack of appropriate job-search skills has been cited repeatedly by local employment service providers and their clients as a barrier to employment. From your perspective, is this still the case today?"

In total, seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents felt that a lack of appropriate job search skills is still an issue among their clients today. Those service providers who felt that search skills are an issue were asked "how could job-search skills training be better delivered?" Two key themes emerged from responses to this question. First, respondents felt there was a need for more one-on-one time with clients, to assess and meet individual needs. Second, some generic job-search training programs do not address individual needs of specific target groups. Specific groups identified included new Canadians and youth.

In total, seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents felt that a lack of appropriate job search skills is still an issue among their clients today.

8.6 Access to Work Experience Programs

Work experience programs were cited repeatedly in previous research as valuable supports in connecting clients with employment. Previous research also suggests that there are not enough work experience programs to meet local need. To determine whether this gap in service still exists today, service providers were given the following statement and question:

> "Previous research has identified a lack of work experience programs (eg. Co-op and apprenticeship programs, work placements, job shadowing, etc.) as a gap in local employment services. Does this gap in service still exist today?"

In total, seventy four percent (74%) felt that a lack of work experience programs still represents a gap in employment service today. In terms of the value of work experience programs, service providers were asked "are work experience programs valuable in increasing the employability of clients? Respondents were asked to rate their perceived value of work experience programs on a four point scale, 1 being "Not Valuable" and 4 being "Very Valuable". In total, ninety-three percent of respondents felt that work experience programs were either "Valuable" or "Very Valuable".

In total, seventy four percent (74%) felt that a lack of work experience programs still represents a gap in employment service today.

When service providers were asked to explain their perceived value of work experience programs, two key themes emerged. First, respondents identified the "experience trap", where an individual can't get work without experience, but can't get experience without work. Work experience programs were seen as an opportunity to increase their experience and improve their resumes. Second, work experience programs were seen as opportunity for individuals to "test drive" a job in a particular field, and determine whether that is the type of job they actually want.

8.7 Service Coordination and Case Management

The final section of the survey was designed to assess the level of coordination within the local employment services sector, and determine how client service use and outcomes are tracked as they move throughout the system.

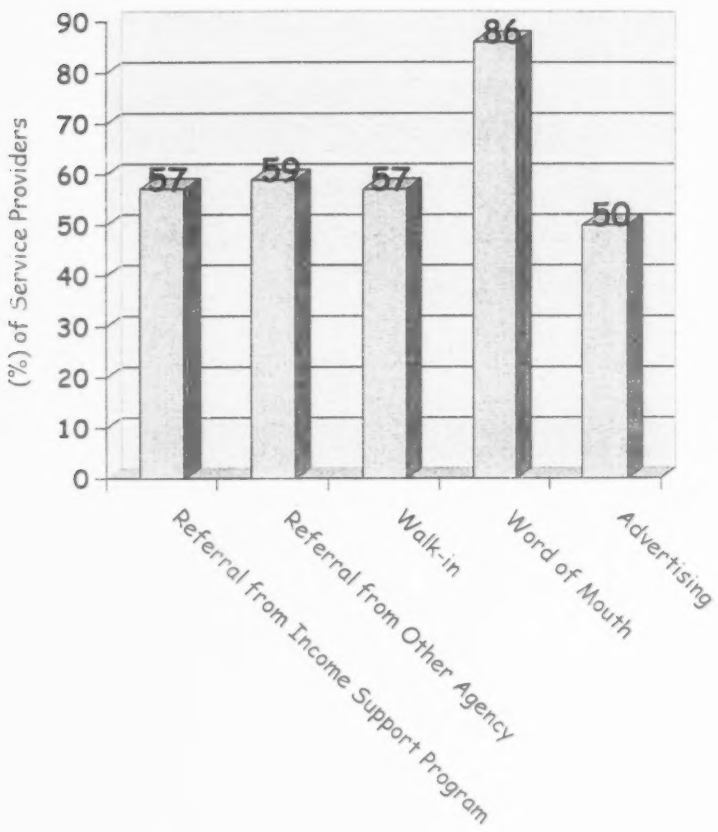
Service providers were asked how clients generally connect with their agency. Respondents were given a list of options and an "other" category to capture alternatives not included in the list. As clients of a particular agency might connect through a number of ways, respondents were asked to check all that apply.

Ninety-one percent (91%) of agencies surveyed conducted some form of needs assessment with new clients.

As shown in CHART 12, clients most generally connect with those agencies surveyed through "word of Mouth" (85%). While "advertising /promotional materials" was least often identified by respondents, "walk-ins" (57%), "referral from another agency" (59%), and "referral through an income support program" (57%) received similar response rates.

In efforts to understand how client information is collected, service providers were asked "does your agency complete a standard intake form for new clients?" in total, eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents did complete a standard intake form. In addition, ninety-one percent (91%) of agencies surveyed conducted some form of needs assessment with new clients.

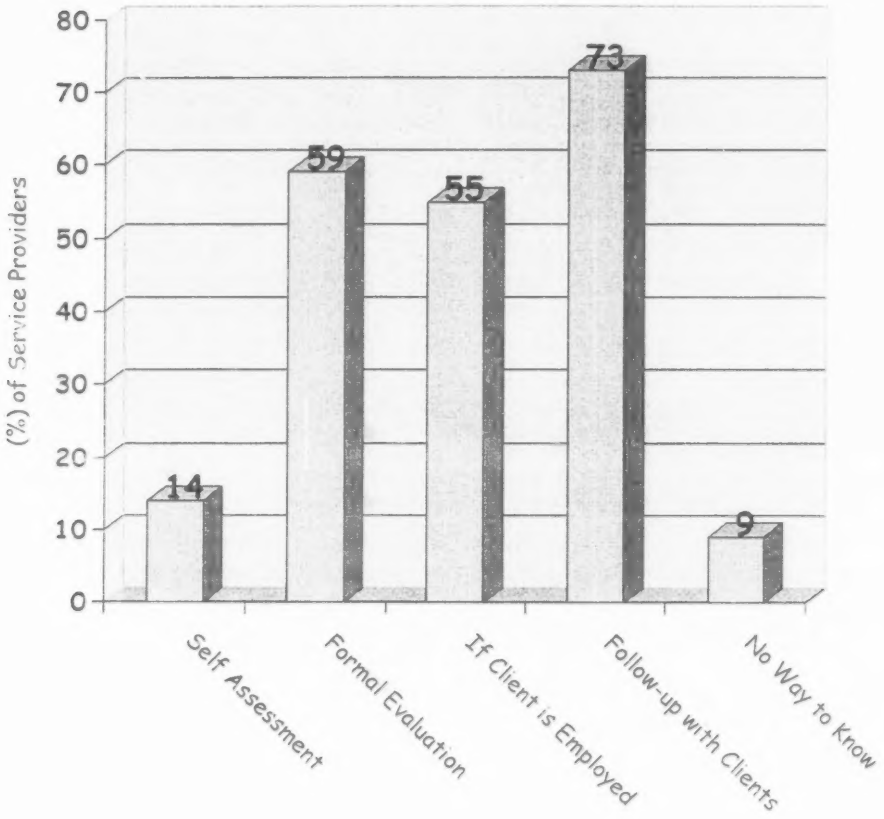
CHART 12: How Clients Connect with Employment Service Agencies Surveyed: Responses from Service Providers



With respect to evaluation, ninety-one percent (91%) of agencies surveyed maintain client records of service use and outcomes. However, only thirty-eight percent (38%) reported sharing client records with other local employment agencies, many of which share only aggregate data and not specific client data. Of those who reported not sharing information with other agencies, ninety-six percent (96%) cited "confidentiality" as the reason.

As shown in CHART 13, seventy-three percent (73%) of agencies surveyed reported conducting "follow-up with clients to determine employment status" as a means to determining positive outcomes from program or service use. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents assessed employment status at the end of the program, and fifty-nine percent of respondents reported conducting a "formal evaluation" with clients

CHART 13: How Client Outcomes are Assessed by Employment Service Providers Surveyed



Having knowledge through previous research that a number of networks exist within the local employment services sector, service providers were asked "is your agency a part of a network or group of local employment service providers that meets regularly?" In total, seventy-four percent (74%) of agencies surveyed were part of a network, ninety-three percent (93%) meeting on a monthly basis.

Service providers surveyed were asked about the purpose of the network or group. Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents reported "service planning", while forty-eight percent (48%) reported "information sharing". To understand the impact of these networks or groups on local employment service provision, respondents were asked "how does your agency benefit from your involvement in a network of local employment service providers?" Respondents most often identified "increasing the coordination of services" and "information sharing - learning about other programs and service in order to make more accurate referrals" as the primary benefits of networking.

In addition to local networks and groups, eighty-three percent (83%) of agencies surveyed "communicate with other local employment service agencies outside a formal network or group." Information sharing and client referrals were primary reasons for agency to agency communications.

To assess the general need for greater coordination that currently exists within the employment services sector, service providers were asked "do you feel that the existing employment services system requires more coordination?" In total, eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents felt that it did. When asked why, respondents identified the need to avoid duplication by assuring the best client/service match. Respondents also identified that information shared through existing networks and groups is not always shared with front-line staff.

In efforts to identify strategies for change, service providers were asked "what could be done to improve the coordination of local employment service?" Respondents most often suggested centralized access to information on local employment programs and service so, agencies could make more accurate referrals.

8.8 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- For each of ten specific service types, more than half of all service providers surveyed required specific qualification to participate, ranging from fifty percent (50%) to eighty percent (80%) for specific services. Those services most often requiring qualifications were "mentoring programs" (80%) and "co-op programs" (80%).

- Thirty-two percent of service providers surveyed identified recipients of specific income maintenance programs (EI, OW and ODSP) as their primary target population. Youth were the second most common target population identified.

- In terms of increasing their clients' competitiveness in the local labour market", "job-search skills (50%), "awareness of employment opportunities" (46%) and "work experience" (46%) were the needs most often identified.

- Service providers surveyed most often identified "lack of transportation" (57%), and "costs associated with work" (29%) as circumstances that affect the employability of their clients. Additional comments provided by service providers further suggested that financial circumstances may be a barrier for some clients, identifying poverty and housing as issues.

- Ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents felt that "a system that maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information on all local services and programs" would be "a benefit to local service providers".

- One stop access to information would cut down on the resources required by service providers to understand what other local employment programs are available. Also, easy access to information would increase an agency's capacity to make more accurate referrals to other local agencies.

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents felt that a lack of appropriate job search skills is still an issue among their clients today.

- Seventy four percent (74%) felt that a lack of work experience programs still represents a gap in employment service today. Based on a four-point scale, ninety-three percent of respondents felt that work experience programs were either "Valuable" or "Very Valuable" in increasing the employability of their clients.

- While eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents conducted a standard intake form with new clients, an ninety-one percent (91%) completed both a needs assessments and record of service use and outcomes, only 38% of these agencies share records with other employment service providers.

- Seventy-four percent (74%) of those surveyed were part of a local network of local employment service providers.

- Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents felt that the current employment service sector requires more coordination. When asked why, respondents identified the need to avoid duplication by assuring the best client/service match. Also, that information shared through existing networks and groups is not always shared with front-line staff.

9.0 FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The second phase of the consultation process involved key informant interviews with five local employment service providers. Key informants were selected to represent services for new Canadians (1), youth (1), persons with disabilities (1), as well as mainstream services (2).

The interview format was designed to add depth to some of the key findings from both the client and employment service provider surveys. Specifically, the interviews focused on the coordination of information on local employment services, job-search skills, client case management, and the coordination of local employment services. The following sections in this chapter of the report identify key themes that emerged from an analysis of interview transcripts.

9.1 Information on Local Employment Services

As discussed in section 5.0 of this report, access to information on local employment programs and services has been an issue identified through previous related research. The survey of service providers included in this study revealed that sixty percent (60%) of respondents feel that this continues to be an issue today. Moreover, ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents felt that "a system that maintained a comprehensive and up-to-date information on all local service and programs" would be "a benefit to local service providers".

A survey of clients of local employment services also suggests a need for a better system of providing information on local program and service opportunities. The level of awareness of specific service types among clients surveyed ranged from fifty-seven percent (57%) for "job-bank kiosks", to twenty-six percent (26%) for "self-employment assistance". Furthermore, clients who reported visiting more than one local employment agency explained that they were "exploring, to see what other agencies had to offer, and collecting information from as many sources as possible to increase their opportunities to find employment".

Given this evidence, key informants were presented with the following statement, and asked a series of related questions:

> "The majority of service providers surveyed felt that access to information on local employment programs and services continues to be an issue, and that a system which maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information would be a benefit to both clients and service providers."

Key informants were asked "from your perspective, how should this system be developed?" A number of key themes emerged from an analysis of responses. All responses suggested a web-based model, but cautioned that funding must be maintained, as updating ever-changing information is a labour intensive process. It was suggested that the system be developed and maintained through a central agency, with a dedicated coordinator.

Local examples of similar systems were also identified, such as Inform Hamilton, provided through Community Information Services. There was also mention of a proposal in development through the Youth Employment Network (YEN). The project called infochimp.monkeybiz.ca, would help to guide youth to the most appropriate employment program or service, based on a self-assessment of support needs.

To better understand how a centralized information system might affect local employment service providers, key informants were asked "what concerns might local agencies have around the development of a centralized information system?" With no clear sense of how an information system might operate, it was suggested that the type of information provided might be a concern for local service providers, depending on the level of sensitivity.

> Funding must be maintained, as updating ever-changing information is a labour intensive process.

There was a sense that there may be reluctance on the part of some local agencies to share information through a central system, suggesting that some agencies are territorial. Any attempts at coordination within the employment services sector may be seen by some as a threat of reduced autonomy.

It was also suggested that easier access to information may mean higher demand for service in some areas. In order to meet a higher demand, agencies may require additional resources

Speaking hypothetically, with the notion the clients could have access to a centralized information system, key informants were asked the following question:

> "Based on your experience, if clients had access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services, would they generally select programs and services that best met their needs on their own, or would they require support in identifying the most appropriate programs and services?"

There was consensus among key informants that clients would require support in identifying appropriate programs and services. Clients must have a clear sense of their career path and support needs before an appropriate service could be identified without assistance. This is often not the case with clients of employment services.

9.2 Job-Search Skills

As discussed in section 5.0 of this report, throughout previous research on local employment services, job-search skills have been identified as a significant barrier to employment. The survey of local employment service providers incorporated in this study support these findings, with seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents suggesting that a lack of appropriate job-search skills is still an issue among their clients today.

To understand how job-search training programs can more effectively address the needs of clients, key informants were asked the following question:

> "According to both service providers and clients surveyed as part of this study, job-search skills are seen as one of the greatest barriers to employment. At the same time, the majority (80%) of service agencies provide job-search training. From your perspective, why do job-search skills remain a barrier to employment when most local agencies provide job-search training?"

Three key themes emerged from an analysis of responses. First, key informants identified a range of personal and social issues that affect ones ability to effectively job-search. These issues include poverty, homelessness, education level, literacy, child care, and self-confidence. It was suggested that clients need to have adequate life skills and stability before job-search training will be effective.

The second theme that emerged from an analysis of responses was that some generic job-search training programs do not assess or address individual needs. This is most evident with specific populations such as new Canadians and youth, who are new to the Canadian and local labour market.

Key informants identified a range of personal and social issues that affect ones ability to effectively job-search.

The final theme was related to the difficulty in evaluating the outcomes of job-search training programs. Key informants noted that is difficult to assess what a client is capable of outside the safety of the program. In many cases, completion of the program is considered to be a successful outcome.

9.3 Client Case Management

The survey of local service providers incorporated into this study indicated that ninety-one percent (91%) of agencies assess the needs of their clients, and maintain records of service use and outcomes. However, only thirty-eight percent (38%) reported sharing client records with other employment agencies, many of which share only aggregate data and not specific client information.

To better understand the benefits of a system which tracked client service use and outcomes, key informants were asked the following question:

> "While the majority of local service providers reported that they maintain client records of service use and outcomes, less than half share records with other employment service providers. From your perspective, would a record of service use and outcomes help you to better serve a new client?"

There was consensus among service providers that a record of service use would be a definite asset to service providers, citing that it would help to reduce overlap in service use. In terms of how this system might work, key informants suggested a "passport model", where a client keeps a record of

services used, and share this with service providers. This would help to better assess the needs of clients.

9.4 Coordination of Local Employment Services

In the survey of employment service providers incorporated into this study, eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents felt that "the existing employment service sector requires more coordination" They identified the need to avoid duplication by assuring the best client/service match.

To understand from a service provider what a "more coordinated" system might look like, key informants were asked the following question:

> "In our survey of service providers, the majority felt that the local employment service system requires more coordination. From your perspective, what should be the key features of a coordinated employment service system?"

The key informants interviewed felt that a coordinated employment system should establish standard approaches to record keeping and staff training. Consistent terminology used throughout the system would also be an important feature.

Any move towards a more coordinated system must involve input from all stakeholder groups, including employers, service providers and clients of employment services.

It was noted by key informants that any move towards a more coordinated system must involve input from all stakeholder groups, including employers, service providers and clients of employment services. The system must also be equitable, where clients are not all referred to a few select agencies.

9.5 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- All responses from key informants suggested a web-based model of coordinating information on local employment programs and services, but cautioned that funding must be maintained, as updating ever-changing information is a labour intensive process.
- There was a sense that there may be reluctance on the part of some local agencies to share information through a central system, suggesting that some agencies are territorial. Any attempts at coordination within the employment services sector may be seen by some as a threat of reduced autonomy.
- There was consensus among key informants that even if a centralized information system was in place and accessible to clients, they would require support in identifying appropriate programs and services.

- Key informants identified a range of personal and social issues that affect ones ability to effectively job-search. These issues include poverty, homelessness, education level, literacy, childcare, and self-confidence.

- Some generic job-search training programs do not assess or address individual needs. This is most evident with specific populations such as new Canadians and youth, who are new to the Canadian and local labour market.

- There was consensus among service providers that a record of service use would be a definite asset to service providers, citing that it would help to reduce overlap in service use.

- The key informants interviewed felt that a coordinated employment system should establish standard approaches to record keeping and staff training.

- that any move towards a more coordinated system must involve input from all stakeholder groups, including employers, service providers and clients of employment services.

10.0 SERVICE PROVIDER ROUNDTABLE MEETING

As part of the research design, a roundtable session for employment service providers was held on Wednesday, October 8, 2003 at the Ancaster Old Town Hall. Personal invitations were sent to selected service providers, with an attempt to target all special needs groups. A total of thirteen participants attended.

The agenda for the meeting opened with a welcome and introductions, followed by an overview of the purpose and design of the study. Participants were then given a presentation of key findings from research to date. This included findings from client and service provider surveys, as well as key informant interviews with service providers.

Participants were provided with two broad questions for discussion. The purpose of the discussion was to clarify and add depth to our understanding of some of the themes emerging from our research. Although broad in their implications, the questions focused on pre-employment supports and client case management. Following is a record of roundtable discussions, including a summary of key findings or themes that emerged.

10.1 Pre-Employment Strategies

As a means to stimulating discussion around the need for pre-employment supports, roundtable participants were given the following statement and questions:

> "Our research suggests that a range of social and individual circumstances (i.e. poverty, homelessness, literacy and self-confidence) may be underlying issues affecting the ability of many clients to connect with the local labour market. Do you believe this is the case? What types of pre-employment programs or strategies would help to reduce the impact of these factors?"

All of the roundtable participants agreed that pre-employment programs are often crucial to a client's success in the labour market. The group identified that with the change in government in 1995, came the disintegration of pre-employment programs as part of local employment services. Specific reference was made to the "Futures" program, which ran for sixteen weeks and supported clients in dealing with life issues as a means to promoting employability.

> that pre-employment programs are often crucial to a clients' success in the labour market.

Participants identified that funders of employment services have been focusing more on job skills over the past eight years. The mandate of local employment services has been to connect clients with the "next available job", regardless of whether the position is appropriate or consistent with their potential. There has also been more of an emphasis on tracking clients and collecting data, which draws scarce resources from local employment service agencies. This results in fewer resources directed toward addressing client needs.

In terms of the benefits of pre-employment programs, participants identified the need to ensure stability in the personal and financial lives of their clients. Clients may be facing a variety of issues that affect their employability and potential for job retention. These issues may include poverty, homelessness, mental or physical health issues, addictions, legal issues and family stresses.

According to roundtable participants, many (and a growing number) of their clients are dealing with so many other issues, that they are unable to focus on employment. They felt that, in many cases, employment service providers can get clients' jobs, but they cannot retain them.

A more "holistic" approach to connecting clients to the labour market was discussed. It was suggested that different service sectors need to work more closely. If a client has serious housing issues, for example, employment services will be less effective in achieving their objective. If housing services were provided simultaneously however, the client could achieve stability and greatly increase their success in securing and maintaining employment.

It was suggested that different service sectors need to work more closely.

It was identified that some clients have many "workers" in their life, such as health professionals, social services, housing services, settlement services, or corrections. Participants agreed that venue or system for co-ordinating services across service sectors would be a great benefit to their clients. Currently, clients often have a series of "case managers" all developing separate service plans that often conflict with each other.

Longer programs and more one-on-one opportunities were recommended to ensure that individual needs are identified and addressed. It was noted that new Canadians are a population with very high needs. With a disproportionately high unemployment rate, many in this population are also coping with settlement issues and the challenge of negotiating a foreign labour market. Displaced or older workers have their own set of issues, often with mortgages and families that they are having difficulties supporting.

Longer programs and more one-on-one opportunities were recommended to ensure that individual needs are identified and addressed.

While not a personal issue, lack of transportation was also raised as a barrier for many clients of employment services. Without a vehicle, many employment opportunities are inaccessible. As suggested, public transportation simply does not get people to where many new jobs are. It was noted that among clients of Aboriginal employment services, upwards of seventy-five percent rely on public transportation.

10.2 Client Case Management

As a means to stimulating discussion around client case management strategies, roundtable participants were given the following statement and questions:

> "A record of client service use and outcomes was seen as a benefit to service providers, in terms of avoiding duplication and directing clients to the most appropriate services. Would a centralized case management system providing assessment and referral system achieve this benefit? What concerns or cautions might local service providers have with this type of model?"

Participants stressed that local employment service providers have been working together for many years sharing information and planning local service delivery. The way funding is currently structured however, providers can only work together to a limited extent, for risk of losing funding. As one participant stated, "pieces of the solution are already out there just not on the scale or of the power that they need to be"

> "Pieces of the solution are already out there, just not on the scale or of the power that they need to be"

Total commitment of the funding agencies must be present before any type of coordinated case management system will work. At the moment many service providers risk losing funding if they work with others.

Alternative models of service delivery were discussed, with specific reference to Work Way in the Halton-Peel Region, and EAS in Kitchener-Waterloo. These systems include a central assessment and referral service. Clients entering an employment agency will be directed to the intake centre for appropriate assessment and referral. The central agency maintains contact with service providers to monitor client outcomes, and conducts any follow-ups. This eliminates much of the administration at the agency level.

While roundtable participants appreciated the benefits of this type of system they also offered some cautions. Providing adequate and respectful client service was a reoccurring concern amongst the participants. An effective case management system must keep people as the focus not just administrative outcomes.

> Addressing a client's full range of needs would result in more efficient and effective integration into the local labour market.

Roundtable participants again identified the need for better co-ordination between service sectors. Addressing a client's full range of needs would result in more efficient and effective integration into the local labour market.

It was strongly recommended that any move toward a coordinated or centralized model of service delivery should involve extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including clients, service providers and local employers. Because of their experience in service and networking with other agencies, local

employment service providers have a solid understanding of the support need and barriers faced by their clients.

10.3 Summary of Key Findings

The following points represent a summary of key findings from this section of the report:

- All of the roundtable participants agreed that pre-employment programs are often crucial to a client's success in the labour market.
- Clients may be facing a variety of issues that affects their employability and potential for job retention. These issues may include poverty, homelessness, mental or physical health issues, addictions, legal issues and family stresses.
- Participants agreed that venue or system for co-ordinating services across service sectors would be a great benefit to their clients. Currently, clients often have a series of "case managers" all developing separate service plans that often conflict with each other.
- Longer programs and more one-on-one opportunities were recommended to ensure that individual needs are identified and addressed.
- Lack of transportation was also raised as a barrier for many clients of employment services. Without a vehicle, many employment opportunities are inaccessible. As suggested by roundtable participants, public transportation simply does not get people to where many new jobs are.
- Total commitment of the funding agencies must be present before any type of coordinated case management system will work. At the moment many service providers risk losing funding if they work with others.
- Alternative models of service delivery were discussed, with specific reference to Work Way in the Halton-Peel Region, and EAS in Kitchener-Waterloo. These systems include a central assessment and referral service. The central agency maintains contact with service providers to monitor client outcomes, and conducts any follow-ups, eliminating much of the administration at the agency level.
- Providing adequate and respectful client service was a reoccurring concern amongst the participants. An effective case management system must keep people as the focus not just administrative outcomes.
- It was strongly recommended that any move toward a coordinated or centralized model of service delivery should involve extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including clients, service providers and local employers.

11.0 DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

This section of the report represents a synthesis of key findings from sections 2.0 through 10.0. Each of these sections was developed independently, and include findings established through the respective research method.

Through an analysis of finding from the various reviews of literature and consultations with key stakeholders, five key theme areas emerged. These theme areas include access to information on local employment programs and services, service coordination, pre-employment supports, work experience programs and transportation. Following is an overview of each theme area.

11.1 Access to Information

Through previous SPRC studies on local employment services, youth, new Canadians, persons with disabilities, and the general population identified access to information on local programs and services to be a barrier to employment in Hamilton. This barrier was also repeatedly identified by local employment service providers in previous research.

The current study clearly confirms that this barrier still exists, and demonstrates the need for a system that maintains comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs services. Clients surveyed through the course of the study reported a low level of awareness of specific types of programs and services available locally.

With respect to employment service providers, ninety-three percent (93%) of those surveyed felt that a system that maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services would enhance their ability to serve clients. Service providers felt that the ability to make more accurate referrals to other agencies would be the main benefit of a coordinated information system.

Key informants suggested a web-based model of organizing and disseminating information on local employment programs and services. They added that funding must be ongoing, as updating ever-changing information is labour intensive. Key informants cautioned that even with comprehensive and up-to-date information, clients would still require support in identifying the most appropriate programs and services.

While the current system of organizing and maintaining information on local employment programs and services is not fully effective, information networks do exist. Given this, key informants suggested that any move toward a centralized information system should include consultations with key stakeholders, including service providers, clients and local employers.

Local research conducted through other community organizations has also identified the need for access to reliable and up-to-date information. Specifically, the HTAB *Local Area Plan* (2001) recommended that Hamilton develop a centralized information system.

11.2 Service Coordination

All of the previous SPRC studies focusing on local employment services pointed to the need for a more coordinated system of service delivery. This was echoed in the current study, with eighty-one percent of service providers surveyed identifying the need for more coordination of services.

Key informants felt that a record of service use would be a useful tool for local service providers. Specifically, it would help to avoid duplication of service use.

The assessment of the Kitchener-Waterloo EAS model shows benefits of central assessment and referral system. After a comprehensive assessment of client needs, this system directs clients to the most appropriate program or service. The result is a reduction in duplication of service use, reduced administration on the part of service providers, and better information on local service needs.

The downfall of the Kitchener-Waterloo system however, is that it refers clients to HRDC funded services only. This means that the system is not fully coordinated, and clients lose the benefits of other local programs and services.

During the service providers roundtable meeting, reference was made to coordinated service delivery models, including the Kitchener-Waterloo model and "Work Ways" which operated in Halton-Peel Region. While participants could see the potential benefits of these models, participants noted that Hamilton has a unique employment service system, where agencies have been working together for many years. Any move toward a more coordinated service delivery system should include consultations with key stakeholders, including service providers, clients and local employers. It should be tailor-made to address local needs and build on the existing service delivery system.

Local research conducted through other community organizations has also identified the need for a more coordinated employment service system. Specifically, the HTAB *Local Area Plan* (2001) recommended that Hamilton develop a centralized assessment and referral service.

11.3 Pre-Employment Supports

Extenuating circumstances in a client's life may limit their success in securing and maintaining employment (eg. poverty, homelessness, family stresses, settlement issues, etc.). As identified by participants in the service provider roundtable discussion, achieving personal and financial stability is key to employability.

Roundtable participants identified the need for funders to shift the focus back to the needs of the client, with more in-depth programs that address the individual needs of the client. Clients of employment services were surveyed, and also identified the need for more one-on-one supports.

Service providers identified the need for more coordination between service systems (eg. Employment, housing, income maintenance, health care), to ensure that a range of client needs can be addressed simultaneously. It was suggested that a venue or system for coordinating services across

service sectors would be a great benefit to their clients. Currently, clients often have a series of "case managers" all developing separate service plans that often conflict with each other.

The Social Vision for Hamilton report (2001) is based on the premise that economic progress is not possible unless we deal with social needs and quality of life issues

11.4 Work Experience Programs

A lack of work experience programs represents a gap in local employment services. Through previous SPRC research, this gap has been identified by newcomers, youth and persons with disabilities. The need for more work experience programs and opportunities is supported by input from both clients and service providers consulted during this study. In fact, seventy-four percent (74%) of service providers surveyed supported this finding.

With respect to local plans and directions, both the HTAB's *Local Area Plan* (2001) and the City of Hamilton's *HR Matters* report (2003) recommend more work experience programs, with a focus on apprenticeship opportunities.

11.5 Transportation

In previous SPRC studies focusing on local employment and employment services, transportation was identified as a barrier to employment. As suggested by service providers during the roundtable discussions, HSR routes do not seem to get people from where they live, to where jobs are. Without a vehicle, many employment opportunities are inaccessible.

Transportation was identified as a barrier by both clients and service providers surveyed during this study. In fact, service providers most often identified transportation (57%), as "circumstances that affect the employability of their clients".

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on a synthesis of key findings from each phase of our research. These include: a review of literature and local demographics; surveys of local employment service providers and clients of employment services; key informant interviews with local service providers; a roundtable meeting with local employment service providers, and; an assessment of an alternative service delivery model.

In some cases recommendations are broad, as they would still require extensive planning to implement. In these cases, provisions have been included to guide the course of implementation, based on findings from the study.

Based on findings from this study, it is recommended:

1. **That a coordinated system of maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services be developed in Hamilton.**

   Provision:
   - The development of a coordinated information system must include consultations with local employment service providers, through existing networks including EARN and YEN. An infrastructure of information sharing does currently exist within the local employment services sector, which should be considered as the foundation for further development.

2. **That a coordinated assessment and referral model of employment services be implemented in Hamilton, based on models existing in other jurisdictions.**

   Provision:
   - Implementing a new model of employment service delivery in Hamilton must include consultations with local employment service providers, through existing networks including EARN and YEN. A new model of service delivery should consider the existing structure of the employment services sector as the foundation for development.

3. **That funders of employment programs and services reinvest in pre-employment supports, including housing, income and health service supports, that address individual needs and circumstances which may effect an individual's ability to secure or maintain employment.**

   Provision:
   - Service providers consulted during this study suggested that some generic programs and services do not meet the individual needs of many clients. Programs and services must be flexible, with the capacity to assess and respond to individual needs.

4. **That funders of employment programs and services direct more resources toward developing and providing work experience opportunities in Hamilton.**

Provision:

- Developing work experience programs (i.e., apprenticeship and co-op placements, job shadowing, mentoring, etc.) requires extensive networking and liaising with local employers. Service providers consulted during this study cautioned that process of developing work experience programs must be well coordinated, so that local employers are not being approached by a number of employment service providers.

5. **That the employment services sector be coordinated with other service sectors (including housing, health-care, corrections, and income maintenance) so that the system can effectively identify and respond to a range of issues and circumstances which may affect a client's employability.**

Provision:

- Findings from the study suggest a multi-disciplinary case management approach, where case managers from different service sectors coordinate the development of a client's return-to-work plan.

6. **That an analysis of public transportation system planning and HSR routing in particular, be conducted to determine the accessibility of industrial areas or other areas with opportunities for employment and that long range planning for the City of Hamilton provide clear consideration of the public transportation needs of the labour force.**

13.0 REFERENCES

Bearing Point Consulting. 2003. HR Matters II Hamilton Human Resource Strategy Business Plan

Caledon Institute of Social Policy. 2002. A Social Vision for the New City of Hamilton

Economics Consulting. May 2002. HR Matters Hamilton Human Resource Strategy Study: A Report on the State of Hamilton's Labour Force

Hamilton Training And Advisory Board. 2002. Enviroscan 2002

Hamilton Training And Advisory Board. 2002. Local Area Action Plan Update

Human Resources Development Canada. 2002. Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

Human Resources Development Canada. 2002. Knowledge Matters: Skills And Learning For Canadians, Canada's Innovation Strategy

Human Resources Development Canada, Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy. 2000. Profile of Canadian Youth In the Labour Market: Second Annual Report to the Forum of Labour Market Ministers

Social Planning And Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth. 1997. Report On The Community Consultation On Local Employment Services

Social Planning And Research Council of Hamilton. 2001. Accessing Employment and Employment Support Services in Hamilton: Issues and Barriers for Persons with Disabilities

Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. 1999. Understanding Youth Unemployment In the HRDC Management Area

Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, YMCA. 2003. Hamilton Youth Employment Summit Report to the Community

Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. 2003. Accessing the Feasibility of Developing a Resource Centre for Internationally Trained Professionals and Trades People

Statistics Canada. 2001. Canada's Ethno-Cultural Portrait: The Changing Mosaic

Statistics Canada. 2001. Community Profiles 2001 Census Data

Statistics Canada. 2002. Participation And Activity Limitation Survey 2001: A Profile of Disability 2001

Statistics Canada. 2002. Youth in Canada 3rd Edition

APPENDIX A

Service Provider Survey

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ASSESSMENT

Survey of Local Employment Service Providers

Your answers to the following questions will help us to understand the services you provide, as well as your client population. It will also help us to gather opinions and perspectives on trends in local employment service delivery, and approaches to enhancing the current employment services sector.

Agency Name: _____

Programs and Services Provided:

We are interested in what types of services or programs your agency provides, and if clients must qualify to access specific services. Please check each service or program your agency provides, and whether or not clients need to meet specific qualifications to participate (eg. EI or OW recipient, new Canadian, Youth, etc.). Please identify specific criteria where it is required:

1. Service/program type	Are qualifications required?		Specify qualifications
❑ Job search training	Y	N	_____
❑ Language/literacy training	Y	N	_____
❑ Resume writing	Y	N	_____
❑ Life-skills/soft-skills training	Y	N	_____
❑ Labour market information	Y	N	_____
❑ Job-finding club	Y	N	_____
❑ Co-op program	Y	N	_____
❑ Apprenticeship program	Y	N	_____
❑ Mentoring programs	Y	N	_____
❑ Computer skills training	Y	N	_____
❑ Other training programs (Please specify:) _____	Y	N	_____
❑ Other service/program (Please specify:) _____	Y	N	_____

2. Does your agency offer services in languages other than English?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

2a) If "Yes", what languages? _____
_____
_____

2b) Are services always offered in languages other than English?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ Only when staff are available

- ❑ By appointment only
- ❑ Other (specify:)_____

Your Client Population:

3. Which of the following would you consider to be your primary target population? (select one)
   - ❑ Persons in receipt of EI
   - ❑ Persons in receipt of OW
   - ❑ Persons in receipt of ODSP
   - ❑ Youth
   - ❑ Older workers
   - ❑ Women
   - ❑ Persons with disabilities
   - ❑ Aboriginal persons
   - ❑ New immigrants
   - ❑ Anyone unemployed
   - ❑ Anyone looking for work
   - ❑ Other _____

4. What do you see as the **most significant need** among your client population, in terms of increasing their competitiveness in the local labour market?
   - ❑ Basic education (including literacy)
   - ❑ Post-secondary education
   - ❑ Soft-skills (including work ethic, attitude, appearance)
   - ❑ Job-search skills
   - ❑ Job-skills training (i.e. computer skills, carpentry, etc.)
   - ❑ Resume
   - ❑ Awareness of employment opportunities
   - ❑ Work experience
   - ❑ Other (specify:)_____

5. Individuals may have the skills and education required to hold a position in the labour force, but other circumstances, or lack of supports, interfere with their ability to work. What do you see as the **most common issue** that affects an individual's ability to work?
   - ❑ Lack of transportation
   - ❑ Child care
   - ❑ Caregiver (other)
   - ❑ Costs associated with work
   - ❑ Physical/psychological impairment
   - ❑ Discrimination
   - ❑ Criminal history
   - ❑ Addictions
   - ❑ Other (specify:)_____

Local Trends:

In previous research on local employment service delivery, a number of trends have emerged. This section of the survey will help to identify whether or not these trends are relevant today, and what could be done locally to address these trends.

Information on Local Employment Services

6. Both clients and local service providers have identified a lack of information on local employment service and program opportunities. From your perspective, is a lack of information on local employment services still a concern today?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

6a. From your perspective, would a system that maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information on all local services and programs be a benefit to local service providers?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

6b. If "Yes", how would benefit service providers? If "No", why not?

_____

_____

_____

6c. What is needed to establish a better system of providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment programs and services?

_____

_____

_____

Qualifying for Programs and Services

7. Access to some local employment services and programs is limited by specific requirements for participation (eg. EI or OW recipient, new Canadian, youth). From your perspective, would the general population benefit from universal access to all local employment programs and services?

Not Beneficial | Somewhat Beneficial | Beneficial | Very Beneficial

7a. Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

Job-Search Skills

8. A lack of appropriate job-search skills has been cited repeatedly by local employment service providers and their clients as a barrier to employment. From your perspective, is this still an issue today?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

8a. If "Yes", how could job-search skills training be better delivered?

_____

_____

_____

Work Experience Programs

9. Previous research has identified a lack of work experience programs (eg. Co-op and apprenticeship programs, work-placements, job shadowing, etc.) as a gap in local employment services. Does this gap in services still exist today?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

9a. From your perspective, are work experience programs valuable in increasing the employability of clients?

Not Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Valuable	Very Valuable

9b. Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

Skills-Training

10. Previous research has identified a lack of appropriate skills training programs in Hamilton. From your perspective, are skills training programs offered in Hamilton consistent with the demands of the local labour market?

Not Consistent	Somewhat Consistent	Consistent	Very Consistent

10a. Do you feel that local employment programs and service have the capacity to meet the demand for skills-training?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

10b. Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

H. Service Coordination and Case Management:

During previous research local employment service providers identified a lack of coordination of local programs and services. This section of the survey focuses on how agencies communicate and work together, and how programs and services are evaluated in terms of client outcomes.

11. How do clients generally connect with your agency?

- ❑ Referral from an income support program (eg. EI, OW, ODSP)
- ❑ Referral from another local agency
- ❑ Walk-in
- ❑ Word of mouth
- ❑ Advertising/promotional materials
- ❑ No way to know
- ❑ Other (specify:)_____

12. Does your agency complete a standard intake form for new clients?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

13. Does your agency assess the needs of your clients?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

13a. If "No", how do you know if a client is a "good fit" with your program or service?

_____

_____

_____

14. Do you maintain client records of service use and outcomes?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

14a. If "Yes", do you share client records with other local employment agencies?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

14b. If Yes", for what purpose?

_____

_____

_____

15. If "No", why Not?

- ❑ Confidentiality
- ❑ Lack of awareness of other local agencies
- ❑ May lose funding to another agency
- ❑ Other
  (specify:)_____

16. How do you know if your program or service provides a positive outcome for your clients?
Self-assessment by client

- ❑ Formal evaluation
- ❑ Employment status assessed at the end of the program
- ❑ Follow-up with clients to determine employment status
- ❑ No way to know
- ❑ Other
  (specify:)_____
  _____

17. Is your agency a part of a network or group of local employment services that meets regularly?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

17a. If "Yes", how often do you meet?

- ❑ Monthly
- ❑ Quarterly
- ❑ Annually
- ❑ Other (specify:)
  _____

17b. What is the purpose of the network/group? (check all that apply)

- ❑ Service planning
- ❑ Information sharing
- ❑ Client case management
- ❑ Other (specify:)_____

17c. How does your agency benefit from your involvement in a network of local employment service providers?

_____
_____
_____

18. Do you communicate with other local employment service agencies outside a formal network or group?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

18a) If "Yes", for what purpose?

_____

_____

_____

19. Do you feel that the existing employment services sector requires more coordination?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

19a. Why/why not?

_____

_____

_____

20. From your perspective, what could be done to improve the coordination of local employment services?

_____

_____

_____

21. Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing our survey.
Your opinions and perspectives are important to us.

APPENDIX B

List of Service Providers Surveyed

SERVICE PROVIDERS SURVEYED

Adult and Continuing Education Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Adult Basic Education Association Employment Services
Ancaster Community Services Inc.
Brain Injury Services of Hamilton
Careerworx
Catholic Family Services
Citizen Action Group
Community Information Service Hamilton
Deaf Empowerment Program
Employment Services City of Hamilton
Fletcher and Associates
Francophone Centre
Goodwill The Amity Group
Hamilton Association for Community Living
Hamilton Literacy council
Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia
Hamilton Public Library Learning Centre
Independent Homeworker's Alliance
Industry Education Council of Hamilton
Job Search Centre
Lewis and Lewis Ltd.
Living Rock
MacDoor
Marafon Call Centre Training Program
Marafon Consulting Services Employment
Now Program McMaster University Career Planning and Employment Centre
Metis Nation of Ontario
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Mission Services/Marty Karl
Mohawk College Return to Work Services/Community Economic Development & All Programs
Neighbour to Neighbour
Ontario March of Dimes
Serve Canada Youth Service Organization
Settlement Integration Services Organization
St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre
Stirling & Associates Inc.
The Job Finding Club
The John Howard Society
Threshold School of Building
Wesley Centre Site
Wesley Centre Victoria Park Location
West Hamilton Employment Resource Centre
YMCA Career Development and Learning Centre
YWCA Hamilton

APPENDIX C

Client Survey

CLIENT SURVEY

Assessment of Local Employment Services

1. Which of the following employment programs or services are you aware of or have used?

	Aware	Used	If used, was it helpful?		
Job Bank Kiosk	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Job Search Training (prompt)	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Resume Writing	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Self-Employment Assistance	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Job Finding Clubs	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Apprenticeship Opportunities	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Job Skills Training (specify)	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Language Training	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
On-Line Supports	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very
Other (specify)_____	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	Very

2. What is your employment status?

Unemployed Employed full-time Employed part-time Employed contract/temporary

3. What type of work are you looking for?

Office/clerical
Labour/trades/transportation
Health care
Information technology
Art/culture/recreation
Media
Social sciences/HR/education/government/religion
Natural & applied sciences
Retail/sales/food service
Other (please specify)_____
Undecided

4. What rate of pay do you expect from this type of job?

$6.85 to $10
$10 to $15
$15 to $20
$20+

5. How many years of experience do you have with this type work?

None
Less than 1 year
1 to 2 years
2 to 4 years
5 to 10 years
10years+

6. How long have you been looking for work?

Less than 2 weeks
2 to 4 weeks
1 to 3 months
3 to 6 months
6 to 12 months
more than 1 year

7. Which local employment service agencies have you visited?

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____ 6. _____

7a. (If more than one agency was visited) Why did you visit more than one agency?

_____
_____
_____

8. Which other local employment service agencies do you know of?

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____ 6. _____

9. Have you had any problems or difficulties accessing employment services in Hamilton?

Yes No

If "Yes", what types of problems?

_____
_____
_____

10. What do you think is preventing you from getting the type of job you are looking for? (check all that apply)

Need job-search skills
Need different job skills
Need more experience
Need more education
Need a certificate or license
Transportation
Child Care
Caregiver (other)
Discrimination (specify)_____
Physical barriers
Other: _____

11. What skills, experience or training would help you to get a job?

Life skills training
Job skills training (i.e. computer skills, cooking, etc.)
Job-search training
Work experience
Basic education (language/literacy, GED)
Additional education (post-secondary)
Other: _____

12. In your opinion, what type of employment service would be most valuable in helping someone find work in Hamilton?

13. Gender:

Male Female

14. Age Range:

16 to 25 46 to 55

26 to 35 56 to 65
36 to 45 65+

15. Are you:
Single Married/common law

16. Number of children living with you:____

17. Level of education:
Secondary school (specify highest grade completed) _____
Trade school Specify) _____
Some college
Completed college
Some university
Completed university
Other (specify):_____

18. Do you have a physical disability that limits the type of work you can accept?
Yes No

19. Are you eligible to work in Canada?
Yes No

20. Were you born in Canada?
Yes No

20a. If "No", what is your country of birth?
_____

20b. How long have you been in Canada?
Less than 1 year 6 to 10 years
2 to 4 years 10 years +
4 to 6 years

21. Are you currently receiving or waiting to receive financial assistance?
Yes No

If "Yes", what type of financial assistance?
EI CPPD
OW (GWA) OAS
ODSP (FBA) WSIB
CPP Other (specify): _____

22. Do you have any other comments?
_____
_____

APPENDIX D

List of Key Informants

KEY INFORMANTS

Chris Cutler, YMCA
Aurelia Tokaci, Settlement and Integration Services Organization
Brad Spencer, PATH
David Vujasinovich, East Hamilton Resource Centre
Linda Oligmueller, Employment and Income Support Branch, City of Hamilton
Roger Parker, Employment and Income Support Branch, City of Hamilton

APPENDIX E

Key Informant Interview Format

KEY INFORMAT INTERVIEW:
LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. The majority of service providers surveyed felt that access to information on local employment services and programs continues to be an issue, and that a system which maintained comprehensive and up-to-date information would be a benefit to both clients and service providers.

- From your perspective, how should this system be developed?

- What concerns might local agencies have around the development of a centralized information system?

- Based on your experience, if clients had access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on local employment services and programs, would they generally select programs and services that best met their needs on their own, or would they require support in identifying appropriate programs and service? (If clients would require support) How should support be provided?

2. According to both service providers and clients surveyed as part of this study, job-search skills are seen as one of the greatest barriers to employment. At the same time, the majority of service providers reported providing job-search training.

- From your perspective, why do job-search skills remain a barrier to employment when most local employment service agencies provide job-search training?

3. While the majority of local service providers reported that they maintain client records of service use and outcomes, just over half share records with other employment service providers.

- From your perspective, would a record of service use and outcomes help you to better serve a new client? (How?/Why not?)

- How could clients be effectively tracked as they access programs and services from various agencies?

- Aside from issues of client confidentiality, what concerns might service providers have with respect to sharing client records with other local agencies?

4. In our survey of service providers, the majority felt that the local employment service system requires more coordination.

- From your perspective, what should be the key features of a coordinated employment service system?

- What concerns would local service providers have around developing a more coordinated employment service system?

APPENDIX F

Roundtable Participants

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

October 8, 2003

Old Ancaster Town Hall

Ancaster

Deiter Klaus, Mohawk College
Patti Stirling, Stirling and Associates
Richard Allen, Industry Education Council
Kelvin Honsinger, Mission Services
Fran Chesney, March of Dimes
Lori Courtnage, Metis Nation of Ontario
Linda Dayler, Catholic Family Services
Sharon Marafon, Marafon Consulting
Bill Thompson, MTCU - Training Adjustment
Ray Dingledine, Hamilton Association for Community Living
David Vujasinovich, East Hamilton Employment Resource Centre
Donna Yates, West Hamilton Employment Resource Centre
Michael Poworoznyk, Community Employment Advocate Alliance

APPENDIX G

Roundtable Agenda

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER ROUNDTABLE MEETING

October 8, 2003

AGENDA

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Project overview**
- **Presentation of Findings to Date**
- **Key Questions:**

1. Our research suggests that factors related to poverty seem to be underlying issues affecting the ability of many clients to connect with the local labour market.
   - Do you believe that this is the case?
   - What types of pre-employment programs or strategies would help to reduce these factors?

2. A record of client service use and outcomes was seen as a benefit to service providers, in terms of avoiding duplication and directing clients to the most appropriate services.
   - Would a centralized case management system providing assessment and referral achieve this benefit?
   - What concerns might local service providers have with this type of model?

3. Are there any critical issues we have not considered or identified in our research and discussion today?

- **Summary of Discussion**
- **Meeting Adjourned**